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PhD Music Thesis

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Psychedelic Style and Embodiment in Psytrance

University of Sussex

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Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis has not been and will not be, submitted in whole or in part to another University for the award of any other degree.

Signature:.....

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Abstract

Psychedelic trance (psytrance) is an electronic dance music (EDM) genre characterized by fast, repetitive basslines set against immersive, textural soundscapes of strange noises and media samples. Originating from the music that accompanied outdoor parties in Goa and other key locations during the early 1990s, its culture has much in common with the psychedelic music cultures of previous eras. The music has evolved with the development of technology over the last 30 years and is now most often produced using computers and shared in digital formats. With the development of the internet, psytrance music and the complex, vibrant culture that surrounds it (psyculture) has come to have a global reach.

A multitude of psytrance substyles have arisen over time, some of which are anchored to psycultures in specific geographic locations. My primary research question is how local psytrance styles emerge from these local cultural contexts. I investigated this using a mixed methods approach which included an online survey with DJs and producers, one-to-one interviews with producers and other scene insiders, musical analysis, and participant observation at a number of UK parties culminating in a set of short ethnographies. In response to existing literature on the global and local in psytrance culture and using UK psytrance as a case study, I contend that the factors that have the most impact on local musical style are embodied experience, identity, space and place.

Secondly, I ask what theoretical and methodological approaches are best suited to the study of psytrance. Responding to electronic dance music scholars' call to 'write the body' into academic works, I make a case for approaches from embodied phenomenology and mixed methodologies which can capture the richness of psytrance culture. I reach a similar conclusion to Charles de Ledesma in his recent work, regarding the unsuitability of Michel Maffesoli's neo-tribe paradigm and the spiritual and ritual comparisons so often made in work on psytrance, in analyses of the UK scene. I argue instead for theoretical paradigms which are less rigid and more open-ended than neo-tribal theory, allowing for multiple theoretical readings of psytrance which can better apprehend its complexities, such as Peter Sloterdijk's *spheropoiesis*. I advocate for theoretical approaches that are mindful of scene participants' view of themselves, in order to more truthfully reflect the reality of their experience in academic writing. For example, steering away from ritual and spiritual comparisons when many people in the UK scene do not ascribe to a spiritual worldview.

The main insight I offer here is that psytrance style, in addition to being spread through means which are easily recognisable like language, performance and collaborations

between artists, can be communicated in more subtle ways between listeners on the dancefloor, like affect, gesture and bodily comportment. The contributions to knowledge I make include: the new data I have gathered on the UK scene through my mixed methodological approach and my analysis of this; the phenomenological analysis of psytrance found throughout but especially in chapters 2 and 3; my use of *spheropoiesis* theory to connect the inner psychological experience of psytrance, revealed through embodied analysis, to group experiences, spaces and places, and how I combine the notions of *cultures of circulation and feedback* (Novak), *milieux cultures* (Dürschmidt, Webb) and *spheropoiesis*, to conceptualise how cultural information flows through networks of scenes in different geographic locales.

0. Introduction

The drama is internal.

The above quote is taken from *Duckman: Private Dick/Family Man* (1994-97), an animated comedy show in which Gregg Berger plays the supporting role of Cornfed, a pig-detective. Cosmosis (Bill Halsey) repurposes Berger's formal, deadpan delivery during a sudden pause in his track 'Spores from space?' (1998) and in doing so, emphasises that the psytrance experience begins within the body, where forces of affect, emotion, cognition and psychoactive enhancements collide to create rich virtual worlds and narratives.

Psytrance (psychedelic trance) is an EDMC that has its provenance in the Full Moon parties of Goa in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Characterized by repetitive basslines set against immersive soundscapes of strange noises and samples from sci-fi and documentary films, its bassline pulses, loud and dominant but deep enough that the front end of each note is slightly indistinct, something felt more than heard, like a heartbeat. Amidst sci-fi B-movie laser beam sounds and technological glitch noises, organic sounds are mimicked with digital technology: shimmering light, bird calls, and water droplets - elements of the natural world mediated by computers. Like other electronic music genres, timbre, texture and rhythm are foregrounded, but psytrance producers explore these dimensions of sound with a level of virtuosity which sets it apart from other EDM genres. The pulse is generally 120 BPM or higher, the speed of a person's heartbeat when they are physically exerting themselves. The beat is amplified to a level that vibrates the viscera of folk on its dancefloors, rousing and

elevating, dominant, yet also warm and soothing. Psytrance is dance music with a generous pinch of psychedelic: techno for hippies. It has grown into a global culture with distinct scenes in many localities and for many scene participants constitutes a lifestyle and part of their identity. Psytrance can be considered a permutation of psychedelic music cultures in other eras - in particular, the hippie era of the late 1960s - due to its immersive dance-floor experiences and the widespread use of psychoactive substances among scene participants. I would also posit that as well as being related to 20th century psychedelic pop cultures, it can be placed in the cross-cultural, multi-genre group of psychedelic musics, as I outline below in section 0.4.

As St John describes in his seminal work *Global tribe: Technology, Spirituality and Psytrance*, a music culture centred on jam bands and beach parties was thriving in Goa from the late 1960s and developed into the famous Full Moon dance parties during the early 1970s (2012b: 34-38). Hippies arriving in the late 1970s and early 1980s brought fresh music with them on cassette and DAT tapes (ibid 2012b: 40-41). Psych rock artists of the late 1960s moved away from strophic song structures by elongating the instrumental breaks between verses and improvising in the space. In the same way, music lovers who travelled to Goa in the late 1970s would bring mix tapes from their home cities with the latest records strung together, pop lyrics excised to desubjectify the musical material and enable its repurposing in the service of mind expansion (ibid 2012b: 39).

Not all would appreciate the similarities in approach between psych rock and the new electronica which was gaining popularity, though. The “original freaks” of Goa’s music scene, whose acoustic jam sessions had developed into parties accompanied by psychedelic rock and soul music, sometimes came into contestation with the new influx of hippies, provoked by the stylistic shift from lyrical psychedelia to desubjectified, electronic psychedelia at parties (St John 2012b: 40-41). Those original freaks whose tastes evolved in parallel with the stylistic development taking place were able to roll with the changes. Goa Gil for example, who had been part of the Goa music scene since around 1970, though reportedly resistant to the new techno sounds initially (ibid 2012b: 41), rose to prominence as a DJ at beach parties in the latter half of the 1980s and remains an icon in the psytrance world today. His continued involvement in the scene over the years, and that of other veteran iconic figures like Raja Ram, is a unifying thread running through the different permutations of psychedelic music that have arisen over the last half century.

At the end of the 1970s and beginning of the 1980s, the musical shift was inexorable, demonstrated by the inclusion of electronic artists like Kraftwerk and Tangerine Dream in party mixes (St John 2012b: 40-41). This newly imported electronica was also blended with

the spiritual music found in India and other countries on the hippie trail. Goa had become a cultural nexus, a site of discourse with music scenes all over the world. As DJ Dave Mothersole, a veteran of the early Goa beach parties, recounts, diverse electronica like Chicago house, Detroit techno, new wave, electronic body music, goth and industrial collided there and DJs, such as French innovator Laurent, were playing a pastiche of continuous hypnotic music - the proto-Goa trance sound (2012).

Psytrance has been driven by technology from its inception to present day and changes in its style have been profoundly influenced by advances in technology, from the Roland 303 synth, to DAT tapes, to the Access Virus virtual synthesizer, to software like Logic and Ableton Live, and producers and listeners alike vaunt the high production values of the genre. Analogue technology allowed producers to move further away from the more tonally centred, melodic Goa trance sound, gradually changing to a less subjectified, noisier sound and the advent of affordable digital technology and software increased the range and precision of the sounds: somewhere along that transition from mostly analogue tools to the predominance of digital technologies, the genre would become known as psytrance. The internet and sequencing software allowed many new producers to come forth, making DIY psytrance from their bedroom studios, with digitisation offering both new capabilities and new limitations which would significantly impact the sonic aesthetic. The vibe became even more eclectic and cosmopolitan with the increase in accessibility to source materials for sampling via the World Wide Web and as production software continued to develop, providing scope for intricate sound sculpting and textural variation.

In the same way that original freaks of the 1960s and 1970s found electronic music taking over the accompaniment to Goa beach parties, so the enthusiasts of the 1980s and early 1990s found the slower, more melodic style was being eclipsed during the mid-90s by faster, driving BPMs and a darker vibe. Goa Gil for example was deliberate in his intention to create a kind of millenarian ritual, using fast music with a dark atmosphere at night which would gradually shift to lighter, more uplifting music in the morning, symbolising death and rebirth (St John 2011: 91-92).

Psytrance is an intrinsically cosmopolitan music genre - see for example Rietveld's chapter on this subject (2010: 69-88). As Jenny Ryan tells it, from the initial sites where psytrance emerged such as Goa creative innovation sprang out to many other parts of the world, with other locales offering their own individual take on the music and surrounding culture (2010: 186-202). During the 2000s a new generation of psytrance artists emerged as a result of progress in technology and the internet becoming faster and more widespread. In the 2010s to the present time of writing the global culture is alive and kicking, with many major

festivals, labels and scenes worldwide but, in the UK at any rate, the landscape has evolved with big changes taking place in regional enclaves as a result of many factors including, as some of my study participants highlighted, legal and socio-economic issues, which I expand upon later in the thesis.

My interest in psytrance began in the early 2000s after its initial wave of popularity during the 1990s had diminished somewhat. At the time I was a classical musician with a love for music from the baroque period and also a fervent metal-head, listening to a range of styles from stoner rock to thrash and industrial metal. My musical tastes led to an appreciation for live performance, melodic and rhythmic virtuosity, extreme volume and noisy timbre.

Only a little electronic music had made it into my regular playlist by the late 1990s, mainly ambient techno and breakbeat artists, so my first encounter with psytrance in a small Brighton nightclub was overwhelming: the onslaught of the beat on the small dancefloor, the unfamiliar sounds and the strangely dressed people – I didn't stay long. Over time I was drawn to more events, listened more widely to the music and made friends in the scene. I found parallel qualities in the music that I enjoyed in other favourite genres such as the overwhelming volume - particularly in the bass - and speed that gave a similar sense of empowerment as listening to thrash metal.

Unlike other genres I listened to, the complexity of psytrance lay not in the melodic or harmonic quadrants but in texture and timbre and I began to think about this when I was on the dancefloor at psytrance events and visualise the music as a virtual, sonic ecology. As I listened to more music I began to learn about the different subgenres and local styles and to wonder why each regional style came to sound as it did. One factor that seemed obvious was psychoactive substance use – this music was written for listening to whilst high, different geographic regions have different substances available with different qualities of high and perhaps this influenced the writers of the music. As more literature on psytrance was published I expanded this idea – psychoactive substances are very important to the music but it was clear that was one factor in a constellation of factors that influenced style.

My main research question at the onset of my PhD was: how do regional styles of psytrance develop? Several sub-questions emerged from this. Psytrance, for all its different subgenres, can be quite homogenous sounding to the inexperienced ear, but styles tied to regions of the world are widely recognised by scene participants: what musical characteristics differentiate regional styles of psytrance? Are certain stylistic traits tied to a geographical location? What elements of the surrounding culture in which a scene is embedded influence the sound of that region?

As I began collecting data, sub questions to this main research problem arose: I set up an online questionnaire asking psytrance DJs and producers a range of questions linked to their experience of listening to and composing psytrance and psytrance mixes and regional styles of psytrance. Some key questions arose from the analysis of the data collected. Firstly, participants' descriptions of the music fleshed out my conception of psytrance as a sonic environment they construct, with psychedelic sounds as objects and agents within the musical space created. I used a phenomenological approach to analyse the meaning of these characteristic sounds and ask whether particular sounds can be markers of regional styles, particularly UK styles. Secondly, I coded the data to extract important words and themes which describe the embodied experience of listening and dancing to psytrance in different contexts. I used the words 'trance', 'groove' and 'flow' and viewed these through existing literature on trance states to ask whether certain styles might encourage different qualities of trance and whether these different qualitative experiences could be markers of difference between regional styles.

The main secondary research problem emerged from my own experience of researching psytrance and applying different methodologies and approaches to it. Psytrance is a global culture that has been in existence for several decades so there are many local scenes worldwide, each one enmeshed in a regional culture which could contribute to the production of style in innumerable ways. Many scene participants write music and share it digitally, so there is a huge amount of music available to listen to. Given these statements are true, what research paradigm and methodological approach will enable me to answer these research questions in a meaningful way?

Literature Review

0.0 Psytrance Research

Research into psytrance emerged during the early 2000s it gained traction during the latter half of the decade. Taylor wrote about how participants in the New York Goa scene of the 1990s saw music technology used in their events (then vinyl and turntables) as a natural progression from earlier tools used through history to facilitate dancing and ritual (2001: 191). In his MA thesis, Uri Pladott analysed gesture in psytrance music (2002), something that I look at in chapter 2 and other parts in this thesis. St John, the most notable and prolific writer on psytrance, has written about it through the lens of Victor Turner's anthropology,

drawing comparisons between non-Western ritual cultures and EDM (2008). Meanwhile, Vitos' work has centred on the Czech dark psytrance scene (2009, 2011, 2015). The first volume of scholarly essays on psytrance, *The Local Scenes and Global Culture of Psytrance*, was published in 2010 (St John 2010b), followed by *Global Tribe: Technology, Spirituality and Psytrance*, a comprehensive ethnographic study of global psytrance culture (St John 2012b). The first volume of an academic journal devoted entirely to psytrance was published in 2012 (St John 2012c).

Scholars writing about psytrance so far have explored its ritual and religious aspects via anthropological horizons and the neo-tribe theory of Michel Maffesoli (1996) as in the work of St John (2012b); the social geography of the scene, especially as a liminal culture expressed in global and local nodes, for example the first edited volume on psytrance, *The Local Scenes and Global Culture of Psytrance* (2010b); themes of decline and exodus via retrospectives for instance Anthony D'Andrea's work on the decline of psytrance in Goa (2010); politics of the dance floor including concepts like the Temporary Autonomous Zone (Riley et al. 2010a, Ryan 2010) and issues of race, nationality and age (Saldanha 2005, Schmidt and St John 2010).

A number of works have been published on psytrance and the virtual, both in terms of the online world of psytrance (Greener and Hollands 2007, Ryan 2010) and the virtual in terms of inner psychological space that arises through the technology of the dance-floor (Vitos 2014, Vitos 2015, Vitos et al. 2015, Simão and Guerra 2016). Historical parallels have been drawn, such as in Baldini's work on psytrance culture, Dionysianism and the Bacchanalia (2010). The development of the scene has become a thread of research, with Robin Lindop examining psytrance's survival through its absorption of stylistic qualities from other EDM subgenres (2010), and De Ledesma looking at its stylistic development through a rhizomatic image of thought (2010). Much has been written on the cultural and identity work done in psytrance, including the tensions between purpose and play (O'Grady 2012, van Straaten 2012), conscientiousness and the pleasurable (St John 2010a). William Echard also touches upon psytrance in his recent work on psychedelic pop music, which he analyses through topic theory (2017). More recent contributions to the field have covered the role of drugs at the psytrance party (Kajanová and Mrhálék 2019), cosmopolitanism (Kyriakopoulos 2019) and open-air parties and notions of well-being (Walter 2018). Deirdre Ruane's 2017 PhD thesis covers drug use and substance induced crises at transformational festivals and the support versus boundary creation over psychoactive substance use that occurs within peer groups. Christopher Charles' PhD thesis talks about a local UK psytrance scene, Bristol and collaborations and connections within geographical space that influence composition styles

of artists (Charles 2019). At the time of writing this thesis has only just been published, so although this work would offer some valuable perspective in the present thesis, I don't have time to read or critique it, only offer this brief acknowledgement.

0.1 EDMC Research

Here I outline some of the themes and methodologies have been explored in this field.

Electronic dance music (EDM) has many subgenres and since the 1990's there has been a proliferation of work written about it, spanning many disciplines. A comprehensive literature review of the field falls outside the scope of this thesis, but I have tried to include work that spans the entire period since the inception of the field during the 1990s and include work from as many of the disciplines and covering as many of the topics that have arisen from it as possible, for example from Will Straw and his article on popular music scenes (1991) and Sarah Thornton's book about club cultures and subcultural capital (1996). I also refer to work from as many of the disciplines and covering as many of the topics that have arisen from the field as possible. In the body of the thesis the reader will come across many more citations from this area, so I have tried to make it as concise as possible, relating mostly to the areas I focus on in the thesis for example, the UK scene.

During the 1970s and 1980s subculture theorists at Birmingham's Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) led the thinking on youth cultures, including those based around music. Using semiotic approaches such as the encoding/decoding communication model of founder Stuart Hall (1973), they conceptualised them as heroically resisting the hegemony of mainstream culture and the establishment. The central concepts of the CCCS are set out in Hall and Tony Jefferson's *Resistance Through Rituals: Youth Subcultures in Post-War Britain* (1975), Geoff Mungham and Geoffrey Pearson's *Working Class Youth Culture* (1976), Dick Hebdige's *Subculture and Style* (1979) and Willis' *Profane Culture* (1978/2014).

During the 1990s many scholars began to challenge this model and favour sociological paradigms using ethnographic and qualitative methodologies (Muggleton and Weinzierl 2003: 9). For example, Straw revived and developed the concept of *scene*, which allowed changes happening at an international level to be included in the study of local music cultures (1991: 373). In her research on club culture, Thornton (1996) used Pierre Bourdieu's theory of symbolic capital (1984) to show how clubbers demonstrated hipness and elevated their status within the culture. The 1990s saw a proliferation of work on the rave and free party scene, particularly concerning the law, moral panic, politics and policing.

The relationship that rave had with the press and how that sparked moral panic in the UK, set against the neo-conservative politics at the time was looked at by a number of scholars, for example George McKay (1998). Another strand of research, including work by David Hesmondhalgh (1998) and Hillegonda Rietveld (1998a), looked at the DIY nature of the dance music scene in the UK. Rietveld also explored house music from a historic perspective, tracing its roots in disco (1998a) and Simon Reynolds delved into its hip-hop roots (1998), uncovering a darker side to extended ecstasy use and how this was reflected in the music.

During the 2000s scholars like Kembrew McLeod (2001) looked at genre and subgenre in electronic dance music culture (EDMC) and Hesmondhalgh (2005) continued the critique of the CCCS approach, exploring the concepts of subculture, scene and tribes. More recently, Tammy Anderson (2009) looked at reasons for the decline in rave culture, perhaps taking a cue from Reynolds earlier work, in a socio-ethnographic vein. EDMC scholars have made contributions to the field from the perspective of aesthetics, phenomenology and other philosophical areas of enquiry, as I also do in this thesis. Some recurring themes are affect and emotion and how they are communicated through music, for example in the work of Drew Hemment (2004) and others, for example Beate Peter (2009), explore EDMC through the lens of particular schools of thought in psychology.

As EDMC studies is an interdisciplinary field, much work has been published about methodological approaches, for example, the work of Luis-Manuel Garcia (2013) on how to conduct fieldwork in a nightlife setting or the impact of the researcher's own identity on fieldwork, for example Dina Perrone (2010) and her work on gender and sexuality or Karenza Moore and Fiona Measham (2006) and their writing on reflexivity in club studies. Other scholars, such as Graham St John (2013) have tackled the problem of how best to transcribe and communicate dance-floor experiences to readers - something I expand upon below in a discussion of my own methodological approach. Identity has an important function in EDMC in terms of group dynamics and boundaries: multiple styles and identities are constantly emerging, being performed, evaluated reflexively and updated. Scholars like Rebekah Farrugia (2012, 2017), Barbara Bradby (1993), Tara Rodgers (2010), Tami Gadir (2017) and Susana Loza (2001) have written about gender and sexuality in relation to DJing, music technology and sound, while scholars like Arun Saldanha (2005) have written about race and other aspects of identity, for instance Daniel Cookney's thesis (2015) on the use of masks by DJs.

As EDM is driven by the evolution and creative use of technology, this has been a frequently recurring subject, particularly the multitude of issues thrown up by the technique of sampling, as explored by Tara Rodgers (2004), for example. Other scholars, like Aksel Tjora, have focussed on how technology mediates performance and embodied experience (2009). An important moment in this area of the field was Timothy Taylor's work on music technology and culture, *Strange Sounds* (2001), where he makes many insightful observations about technology and identity in a variety of music scenes in which he conducted ethnographic research, including the Goa Trance scene in 1990s New York.

The use of psychoactive substances is central to many EDMCs, particularly acid house and psytrance, so this is another oft-visited subject and possibly one of the most interdisciplinary areas of the field, given that it can include neurobiological, psychological and sociological perspectives as well as arts and humanities based enquiries like the perception of music, aesthetics, politics and legal issues, and creativity. An important and well-cited work is Philip Kavanaugh and Tammy Anderson's article on psychoactive substance use in a specific music scene and the relationship between risk taking and solidarity (2008). A variety of studies have looked at patterns of substance use, for example the work of Kellie Sherlock and Mark Conner (1999) or Jim McCambridge et al (2005, 2007) on trends in the UK, in relation to different subgenres of EDM and polysubstance use patterns, as in the work of Measham et al (2009), the use of specific substances, for example in the work of Moore and Measham (2008) and government policy on psychoactive substances, for example in the work of Zoë Smith, Moore and Measham (2009).

During the last 10 years more work has been produced on aspects of embodiment and EDMCs, such as Joanna Hall's thesis on drum 'n' bass (DnB), dancing and identity (2009) and for example, Bryan Rill's article on rave and embodied idealism (2010). The body is a key theme in my thesis so I cite many more works on this topic in the body of the thesis. EDMC research has converged with the field of sound studies to provide exciting perspectives on the materiality of sound, for example Mandy-Suzanne Wong's analysis of sound objects in EDM (2013), tactility and affect in sound, for instance in the work of Garcia (2015) and the materiality of tempo, as in the work of Paul Théberge (2015: 343). This is an area of research I focus on in chapter 2.

Place has been explored via work on specific locales and time periods, for example Kai Fikentscher's work on underground dance music in New York (2000), festivals and their campsites, such as Bryan Schmidt's article on boutique festivals and relational aesthetics (2015) and the networked interaction between geographical locales and virtual, online places like Daniel Allington, Byron Dueck and Anna Jordanous' study on the city of London and the

online audio distribution platform, Soundcloud (2015). Space has been focused on by a number of scholars, particularly in relation to clubs as with Alice O'Grady's work (2012) and Ben Malbon's writing on clubbing, dancing and ecstasy (2002). Other scholars like Botond Vitos (2014, 2015) and Emília Simão and Paula Guerra (2016), have explored the dance-floor and virtual space.

A more analytical perspective on EDM has been taken by some music scholars, for instance Mark Butler, who has published a number of works on rhythm, meter and groove in EDM (2001, 2006b, 2006a). Other scholars have combined this analysis with psychobiological perspectives, linking musical characteristics to bodily processes, for instance Luis-Manuel Garcia's work linking repetition to pleasure (2005) or like Tami Gadir, looking at how musical events relate to body movement (2014). Scholars like Stella Sai Chun Lau (2006) and Graham St John (2006) have explored the rich ideological and spiritual landscape of EDMCs, including its parallels with religious practices and others, for example Christopher Partridge (2006, 2013) have studied the connection between spiritual aspects of EDMCs, politics and protest. I explore this area in chapter 3.

Many important edited collections of scholarly work have been published in EDMC studies; a key text from the late 1990s is Jeremy Gilbert & Ewan Pearson's book *Discographies: Dance Music, Culture and the Politics of Sound* (1999) and most recently Mark J. Butler's *Electronica, Dance and Club Music* which includes a wide ranging collection of chapters from different disciplines and discusses a diverse number of musical genres and scenes (2017). Most recently, Jonathan Weinel's book *Inner Sound: Altered States of Consciousness in Electronic Music and Audio-Visual Media* was published, in which he explores the ways that electronic music and audio-visual media, including psych-rock, EDM, experimental film and videogames, represent and induce altered states of consciousness (ASC). He also asks, in a similar vein to my research, how the ethos of the subcultures that engender the ASCs are reflected through media (2018)¹.

0.2 My research in relation to the field

Part of my thesis is a study of the UK scene and several scholars have produced work about the UK: Lindop's study of psytrance as a meta-genre (2010) focuses on British style, as does De Ledesma's work on rhizomatic stylistic development (2010) and his thesis analysing the

¹ This work was published very recently so although it is no doubt of relevance to this thesis, I am not able to properly respond to it in beyond acknowledging its publication.

psytrance festival Offworld, where he considers the suitability of anthropological approaches to the UK scene (2011). Rietveld has written about the musical and extramusical cosmopolitanism of psytrance with considerable mention of the UK scene (2010) and St John (2012b) and other scholars have explored UK psytrance as part of their work, even if they have not focussed in on it specifically, in the course of talking about well-known figures like Simon Posford (Hallucinogen) and labels like TIP Records.

As I will expand on below, St John says he attempts to 'write the vibe' into his work with autoethnographic thick description and a mixture of poetics and prose (2013). Vitos' work has turned towards the embodied experience of the dance-floor and other scholars have also written about embodiment in the course of their work, but there still seems to be a gap in the research for an approach to psytrance, and UK psytrance in particular, from an embodied perspective, drawing from several fields and methods. In fact, as the reader will discover below, St John has made a case for this kind of approach. The central part of my argument is that the factors that have the most impact on local musical style are embodied experience, identity, space and place. I make a case for approaches from embodied phenomenology and for mixed methodologies, as these approaches are able to capture the richness of psytrance culture. The main insight I offer here with respect to the role of embodiment in psytrance style, is that it can be communicated in subtle ways between listeners on the dancefloor, through affect, gesture and bodily comportment.

My voice joins De Ledesma's in his work the UK festival Offworld (2011), when he suggests a move away from the rigid categories of local and global, the neo-tribal paradigm of Michel Maffesoli (1996) and the spiritual/ritual paradigm of Victor Turner (1969/2017, 1995) espoused by key scholars in the field like Graham St John (2008, 2015) - at least when it comes to researching the UK psytrance scene. My views align with De Ledesma when he points out that the concept of neo-tribes is too abstracted to capture the experience of the individual person (2011: 124) particularly as an embodied, individual perspective is so central to my reading of psytrance. I am also in agreement with De Ledesma's assertion that the ritual connotations attached to neo-tribal thinking do not chime with the "unromantic outlook" of UK scene participants, an outlook that was also apparent in the statements of some of the participants in my research. I advocate for theoretical approaches that are mindful of scene participants' view of themselves, in order to more truthfully reflect the reality of their experience in academic writing.

De Ledesma settles on terms like "little culture", "scene" and "milieu" (ibid 2011: 124) when describing psyculture and I also utilise 'scene' throughout the thesis. Later on I bring in post-structuralist theories, introducing Peter Webb's articulation of 'milieu' as it relates to

networked popular music cultures (2010), Peter Sloterdijk's sphere paradigm (2011, 2014) and David Novak's concepts of circulatory flows and feedback in music culture (2013). I develop these concepts in an attempt to capture the complexity of psytrance without confining it within rigid global/local, ritual and trial paradigms. I argue for theoretical approaches which are more open-ended, allowing multiple theoretical readings of psytrance to be used simultaneously.

0.3 Networked Milieu, Circulatory Flows & the Global/Local Paradigm

Here I want to give a brief introduction to some of the concepts I use later in the thesis to describe how regional styles of psytrance arise. *Milieu* is a concept used by cultural theorists and in sociology, where it is associated with the concept of 'social environment' or 'sociocultural context'. Elizabeth Barnett and Michele Casper (2001: 465) define social environment as follows: "human social environments encompass the immediate physical surroundings, social relationships, and cultural milieus within which defined groups of people function and interact". In phenomenology, *milieu* means a "relatively stable configuration of action and meaning in which the individual actively maintains a distinctive degree of familiarity, competence and normalcy, based on the continuity and consistency of personal disposition habitualities and routines and experienced as a feeling of situatedness" (Dürschmidt 2013: 19, citing Webb 2010: 31).

Webb says that his definition of milieu arose partly in response to the CCCS theories around subcultures, scenes and neo-tribes, which to his mind and those of scholars like Sara Cohen, were too prescriptive and did not have enough ethnographic research to support them. Webb states that his definition of milieu encapsulates the "dynamic, fluid and changing nature of music making and musical associations" (Webb 2010: 30-31). It combines Bourdieu's fields of cultural production, where there are competing forces and things are considered in relation to one another, with the phenomenological idea of milieu, which starts from the perspective of human being's experiences in their environment - their *lifeworld* - and works outward from there. Webb's networked milieu is a useful concept for my research as it is person-centred and therefore ideal for an embodied phenomenological approach, whilst simultaneously situating the person's milieu within a wider cultural context. This multi-directional perspective is possible because individuals move through the milieu and at the same time, the milieu surrounds them and affects their movement (Webb 2010: 30). Also, in

the modern, digitally networked world, people are forced to engage not just with their local milieu but with global society on a daily basis (Dürschmidt 2013: 3, 18-24). The word itself implies being in-between places, which seems highly appropriate for describing a culture like psytrance which can be described as *liminal*. The liminal phase is a transitional state that occurs during a ritual. Proposed by Arnold van Gennep (1909/1960), it was later developed by Victor Turner (1969/2017: 94-130) and adopted into both academic discourse and psytrance culture parlance.²

In *Japanoise: Music at the Edge of Circulation* David Novak defines circulation as a “meta-communication across diasporic space-time” (2013: 199-200). Novak talks about the process of circulatory feedback using the metaphor of the audio feedback created in experimental ‘Japanoise’ music, describing feedback loops of circulation connecting different places. Circulatory processes are always in flux and form an ever-changing network of cultural information and practices that is dislocated from a definite geographical place.

As the reader will discover in the later chapters of this thesis, I make the connection between the embodied, rhizomatic approach to psytrance and global and local development of style using the *spherology* of Peter Sloterdijk. In *Spheres I, Bubbles: Microspherology* the first volume of his *Spheres* trilogy, Sloterdijk argues that we are continually coming into the world, encountering it through protective spheres which we create in order to feel safe and nurtured. He asks us to consider the human being as “being and space” in response to Heidegger’s *Being and Time* (Heidegger 1996, 2011: 345).

In contrast with Heidegger, who begins with *Dasein* in the world, Sloterdijk says that we first have to come into the world and therefore a central theme in his image of thought is the experience of being born (Elden and Mendieta 2009). He describes being expelled from the womb into a world that is unfinished and leaves us feeling from the outset that we are not quite at home there and in response to this he creates the concept of *negative gynaecology* (Sloterdijk 2011: 269-342). We leave our mother’s womb and are welcomed by others, so that the beginning of human existence is a coupling (ibid 2011: 333-342). We crave the comfort of the womb, we therefore begin our existence by seeking refuge and recreating the comfort of the womb by building a home - Heidegger’s concept of ‘mit-sein’ or ‘being with’, except in Sloterdijk’s version we are being-with others in an enclosed dwelling (Elden and Mendieta 2009, Sloterdijk 2011: 639).

² For instance, *Boom Festival* in Portugal, which calls its conference space the ‘Liminal Village’.

From Sloterdijk's perspective, we are beings who are compelled to create spaces, who thrive on proximity to others and cannot exist outside the shared spaces we create, a viewpoint that counters modern individualism (Couture 2009, Sloterdijk 2011: 336). Inspired by his work on Nietzsche's *The Birth of Tragedy* (1886/2008), Sloterdijk characterizes his overall philosophical perspective as "Dionysian materialism" (Alliez 2007: 315). This label comes as a result his reading of Nietzsche's work as part of a lineage of marginal thinkers who manage to resist "idealist closure" and is in opposition to academic climates that are hostile to the vitalism (a sort of spiritual or animistic materialism) which Deleuze and other thinkers espoused earlier in the 20th century (ibid 2007: 319-20).

Sloterdijk's spherology is more accurately described as *immuno-spherology*, where philosophical truths are redefined as symbolic immune systems - inner and outer spaces with which a human being protects itself from threats in the outside world and wards off the uncanny. In the same sense, systems of thought such as religion or even political worldviews can be characterized as mass immunization projects. In *Spheres I, Bubbles: Microspherology*, Sloterdijk rethinks human history from this perspective, arguing that the project of modernity has been the replacement of this symbolic immunization with a kind of technological immunization (Couture 2009).

From this first volume, concerned with biological and psychological spaces, Sloterdijk leaps an order of magnitude to *Spheres II, Globes: Macrospherology* (2014), where he describes how we are always in a process of autogenesis - the building of worlds, whether that be material, literary or religious, for example. In this volume he takes a more anthropological bent, concerned with world building on the scale of entire cultures: Western history is retold as a process of the gradual expansion of the collective spheres humans have built for themselves (Elden and Mendieta 2009: 6). The idea which underpins *Spheres II, Globes: Macrospherology* is that all macrospheres are modelled on the intimate biological and psychological microspheres described in the first volume - particularly the womb - and that the creation of spheres (spheropoiesis) is ultimately an attempt to map or transfer our safe, inner worlds onto the outside world (Lemmens 2015: 55-56).

In the last chapter of *Spheres II*, Sloterdijk describes the totemic, homogeneous image of the world (monogeism) that has arisen as a result of globalisation, something that he later responds to and expands upon in his work *In the Interior World of Capital: Towards a Philosophy of Globalisation* (2013). In this later work, he identifies several eras in the development of human spheres; first, the metaphysical, beginning with the ontological and theological spheres of ancient Greece, the terrestrial, instigated by Europe's colonialism and resource-seeking circumnavigation of the Earth, and thirdly the globalisation of saturation,

fuelled by capitalism and technology, where the interconnectedness of our networked world means that everything and everyone is proximal in any given moment (Elden and Mendieta 2009: 55).

Going back to *Spheres* and taking another leap on the logarithmic scale to *Spheres III: Foams* (2016), Sloterdijk describes his “plural-spherology”. In an image influenced by Deleuze and Guattari’s rhizome, he explores the interconnected relationship between human spheres, which in our post-modern era have become bubbles within a large volume of foam. In this multiplicity, each sphere is now both singular and also part of a collective, a networked matrix of bubbles that form our world (Elden and Mendieta 2009: 6, Sloterdijk 2016: 25-37). Sloterdijk theorizes that after the fall of the great *monospheres*, such as theism, human beings have anxiously sought to replace them with a multiplicity of technological immune systems or *technospheres*. He points out the problems inherent in this project, not least that humans are trying to fit all of the Earth and its occupants underneath their symbolic canopy (Lemmens 2015: 56).

0.4 Psychedelic Music Research

The psychedelic qualities of psytrance, such as enigmatic noises and entrancing beats, are a central theme in this thesis, so here I want to explain how I define ‘psychedelia’ in musical terms. In *The Space Between the Notes: Rock and the Counter-Culture* (1992) Sheila Whiteley gives a broad definition saying that, from a semiotic point view, musical psychedelic coding (the way meaning in musical gestures, sounds, lyrics etc. is encoded and interpreted) “focuses on alternative meanings and involves a correlation of psychoactive substance experience and stylistic characteristics” (ibid 1992: 8). Existing literature places psychedelic pop in the late 1960s and 1970s psychedelic rock genre and contemporary psychedelic rock music, via psychedelic soul, such as Parliament Funkadelic, 1980s new wave, 1990s rave and Goa trance, and psytrance, from the 1990s to the present day. In terms of psychedelic pop I would also include genres like stoner rock or metal, 2000s chillwave and less obvious genres of music, such as hip hop inspired by opiates like Purple Drank - a mixture of codeine based cough medicine and carbonated soft drinks. Psychedelic sound also crops up as a compositional device or synecdoche for the psychedelic experience in music, used by artists not otherwise known for having a psychedelic style per se. But the definition of what is psychedelic could be widened beyond the confines of 20th and 21st century western pop music. The Shipibo Icaros have a long history of performing rites using Ayahuasca, creating songs influenced by the plants which are then woven into sacred textiles. Sufi Muslim Dhikr

or Zikr ceremonies can include a hypnotic circle dance often with drums and repetitive singing, whilst in Moroccan Gnawa trance ceremonies, participants enter into possession trance using dance, drums and singing derived from a mixture of Islamic traditions and more ancient pre-Islamic mysticism and lore (Kapchan 2007: 1-11).

My analysis of the statements of my study participants generated a field of words describing psychedelic characteristics ('psychedelicness') in music, which I then arranged within the framework of Peircean semiotics (Peirce 1894) developed by scholars like León Enríquez (2012) and Philip Tagg (2011). Tagg in particular, outlines a useful model for understanding musical communication from which I developed my own model for the study of psychedelic music. I identified three areas of inquiry: first, the subjective effects of music on the listener/dancer, second, the tools and techniques used by people to produce psychedelic sounds and music and the third, associations with wider culture, spirituality and symbolism. The three aspects of psychedelic music I have drawn from my participant's responses are: subjective effects felt in the body of the listener or dancer, composition and audio techniques and extra-musical connotations. Each correlates with the areas developed by Philip Tagg in his model for musical semiosis (2011: 155-93). In this model, the 'sign' is a structural element in the music such as a sound or a gesture, the 'object' is the intention of the composer and the 'interpretant' is the listener who interprets a structural element.

0.4a. Subjective effects felt in the body of the listener or dancer

This first category refers to affects, emotions and bodily comportments that arise in response to psychedelic music: for example, where psychedelic music has a repetitive beat or drone effect, the body entrains itself to this. Music resonates bodies, inspiring repetitive movement or *deep listening*: listening with a trance-like focus which constitutes an altered state. Sounds may remind us of body noises such as a heartbeat, breathing or sounds made by the digestive tract. Resonance felt in the body may also induce a profound realisation of our embodiment by resonating our internal organs. Both of these things bring the listener to a sudden awareness of these processes which we usually do not focus our attention on, or make them seem strange and unfamiliar - creating an *uncanny* or *grotesque body*.

Music may be so loud that its dominance over the body is inescapable (Henriques 2003) or be extreme in other dimensions like speed or pitch, so that there is an overwhelming of the senses, a sensorial overload similar to the sensory effects of psychedelic substances.

Illusory audio effects in the music mimic other sensations experienced whilst on psychoactive substances, heightening the effects of substances being used (see more under composition and audio techniques below).

A sense of psychedelic bodily comportment can be conveyed through the music. In her work on Hendrix, Whiteley explains how in 'Purple Haze', a sensation of drifting comes from a meandering, raga like guitar theme, and describes "lurching harmonies" a feeling of impaired bodily comportment conveyed in the music (1990: 50).

0.4b. Composition and audio techniques

I categorise composition techniques as compositional devices used by any composer, no matter what medium they are working with - instruments, sequencers or synthesizers for example. Audio techniques I classify as compositional devices that involve synthesis, audio processing and manipulation.

The first technique is the juxtaposition of elements for the purpose of confounding the listener; for example, using the elements that are juxtaposed to create a sense of 'what is not' in order to induce an epiphany about 'what is' or some other sudden revelation about the relationship between the elements used. This compositional device can use oddly juxtaposed words, themes, tone colours, volume, pitch or samples and nonsense, or surreal words and phrases in lyrics. These revelatory experiences through oddness are often abstractly and playfully humorous, both lyrically and in musical gestures and sounds - it can even extend to album and track titles, which is certainly true in the case of psytrance. I will discuss the oddly humorous in more detail in chapter 4.

Composers use cyclical patterns, structures and repetition and drones to facilitate altered states of mind like trancing, meditation, flow and deep listening. Experimental, free-form structures can also convey psychedelic states of mind by mimicking the way in which networks of meaning are expanded by the use of psychedelic substances.

The disruption of time is also a common device in psychedelic music - see for instance Michael Hicks' *Sixties Rock: Garage, Psychedelic, and Other Satisfactions* (2000: 73) where he explains that psychedelic music "dechronicizes and depersonalises the listener through its excessive length, repetition, volume, and spatial depth". Alternating between metrically regimented, or *pulsed time* and free floating, irregular *non-pulsed* senses of time can create a feeling of instability and therefore in-between-ness - *liminality* and alterity.³ Many of the psychedelic characteristics Whiteley talks about are found in the 'space between the notes' (1990: 46), for example, the distortion of time at micro levels through changing a note's

³ See Edward Campbell's *Music After Deleuze* Campbell, E. (2013). London: Bloomsbury Publishing. pp. 101-105 for an in-depth explanation of these concepts. I also discuss them in more detail in section 1.3.

timbre over time. Time distortions also occur at the macro level, looking at a piece of music as a whole: for example, unexpected changes to tempo or time signature, or a general feeling of one's body moving through time and space, which occur over the course of the piece (ibid 1990: 46).

There are many ways to take the stable and fixed and make it unstable, uncertain and fluid, but audio techniques such as those found in psytrance production are particularly effective at this. One might feel a sense of shifting foundations through fluctuations in key, pitch, tone colour (timbre), filters, 'rotating' figures, space and proprioception (for example, though changing resonance, delay and positions of sounds in the mix). As Peter Jowers notes in his article about repetition, timbre and identity in dance music (1999), electronic music has allowed musicians to explore even further this focus on the materiality of sound. Drawing a comparison with spoken communication, Hillegonda Rietveld explains how it is as if we are shifting focus from what is communicated by words to the non-linguistic vocalisations that also convey so much meaning and perhaps are neglected when we think about communication (1998b: 243-68).

0.4c. Extra-musical Connotations

The third category I identify in psychedelic music is extra-musical connotations - that is associations with and references to things outside the music. This could include symbolic musical gestures which have connotations with the mystical, aliens, religion or specific psychedelic cultures and can be made by using samples, anaphones (for example, non-Western music scales as a synecdoche) or through lyrics, albums or song titles. Less specific references could be made that point to the kind of ineffable experiences attached to religion or specific psychedelic cultures, for example samples were lyrics that make reference to being 'wasted' or high.

There can also be references to genres that are psychedelic; psych rock (for example, through using a guitar sound commonly used in the 1960s or 1970s psychedelic rock genre) psychedelic soul or the music of non-Western psychedelic rituals cultures the psilocybin mushroom-induced chanting of the Mazatec Curanderos. These references also evoke the various spaces and places in which these psychedelic experiences are couched.

All the elements I have mentioned cause a shift in perceptual 'frame' which is disorienting and overwhelms the senses, body and sense of self in time and space. This mirrors the effect of psychedelic substances and facilitates the putting aside of one's ego or narrative self in order to trance or, in a manner of speaking, become 'possessed' by the music. We temporarily replace our narrative self with the music, the vibe or the flow.

Chapter 1: Substance

Methodology

Here I describe the components of my methodology, how they relate to my research questions and the theoretical principles that underscore the choices I have made. Readers can also refer to Appendix A1 for a diagram outlining the relationship between the adapted communication model described above, my research questions, the methodological tools and the areas of research.

1.0 Initial Research

1.0a. Practice Led Research

In my research for this thesis I employed a range of methods. The first methodological tool I used in my research was a month-long practise-based exploration of a leading Digital Audio Workstation (DAW) software package: Ableton Live. This gave me some foundational knowledge of terms I was likely to come across when speaking to psytrance producers and some experience of the creative process when using a DAW to write psytrance: this was my first foray into an experiential methodological approach. The practice-led research in the form of a month long online training course to learn the basics of Live, which is a popular DAW among psytrance artists. I wrote a number of simple tracks and kept a research diary with the aims of gaining a better understanding of how psytrance is created. This kind of approach falls into the second area of inquiry outlined above, looking at the tools and techniques used by people to produce psychedelic sounds and music.

I found that once I had a rudimentary understanding of how the different screens worked in Ableton Live, it felt more intuitive than the DAWs that I had learned to use back in the late 1990s. Having said that, writing with a DAW is a painstaking process – especially if your midi keyboard skills are not up to par. I met this challenge by using a voice to midi converter called . I met this challenge by using a voice to midi converter called Imitone (Imitone.com n.d.), which made the process of adding proto-melodies and percussive elements a lot more immediate and intuitive for me as a singer. A great deal of time, however, was needed to search for appropriately sounds and refine them – and I expect for producers who have worked their way through multiple sample packs, the search for original and unexpected

noises is even more time-consuming. It is easy to see how producers might take the time to learn how to engineer their own sounds from scratch using VSTs and the like, as this would be less time consuming in the long run and increase creative originality.

One producer I spoke to remarked that the reason that there were not more women writing psytrance was that they were not interested in spending large amounts of their time in their bedroom or a studio staring at a screen and tinkering with intricate noises. There is an in-joke about psytrance producers' 'studio tan', describing the pallor of those who stay inside all day writing music. Whilst this is somewhat a reductive, gender-biased point of view I certainly gained a sense of the time commitment, introspective focus and, when working alone, the isolation one needs to create to write psytrance. Some producers even spoke about working at night time to avoid interacting with others and prevent unwanted 'life' sounds from encroaching into their creative space.

Overall, I achieved my aims with this mode of research, in learning some terminology and in experiencing something of what it is to compose psytrance music. In the end, the tracks I wrote each week were sparse as a lot of time was spent on making the beat and bass-line, which are arguably the most important and the most difficult elements to get right. This is something I have often seen producers comment on in psytrance forums. From discussions with producers I learned that it is important to give each of the little atmospheric noises in psytrance space, so I tried to do this with the quirky and de-tuned percussion I used. This made sense in terms of Deleuze's concept of the BWO, which several authors have extended and applied to popular music analysis: the sounds arise from a foundational plane of consistency, random particles of sound which coalesce to create sonic formations. This is another reason the tracks I wrote felt sparse and incomplete: there was a tension between being sparing with atmospheric, quirky and percussive noises in order to allow sonic formations to arise organically, and wanting to create a rich and psychedelic soundscape to become immersed in.

Another related challenge is having to repeatedly re-listen to sections which leads to experiencing the music moment by moment – there is a danger of losing sight of the piece as whole by trying to perfect an excerpt a few second long. I found I had to balance this with listening to long enough sections that the progressive nature of the piece and its overarching shape are revealed, so that it is possible to still put oneself in the mind of the listener and know in which direction the music take next. This is a necessary expenditure of time, because it is very important in psytrance and progressive music in general to have a sense of breadth, to establish a plane of consistency so that the particles of sound that arise from it feel like novel, spontaneous, non-signified eruptions of sound.

1.0b. Analysis of Psytrance Tracks

The introduction to using a DAW assisted me when I interviewed producers, but also when I came to analyse a sample of psytrance tracks. I examined around fifty psytrance tracks by listening and visualising the music using a spectral analyser (see Appendix A.3 for an example screen shot). Around half were by British artists and half by international artists and I looked at structure, length of tracks, the number of breakdowns and their length, keys and anaphones. Appendix A.1 shows the process I used to analyse the tracks, first recording the data in Microsoft Excel then visually representing it in a number of charts. Among the British tracks, it was apparent that the more commercial, mainstream tracks by recognised artists, in the UK Full-On style tended to have longer introductions, breakdowns and outros, whereas the Dark, Forest and Hi-Tech leaning tracks had the shortest introductions, breakdowns and outros. These results confirmed the generally accepted wisdom in the psytrance community with respect to these substyles (see my discussion with Sam on this topic in the interview transcript in Appendix E.2). I drew out data on the region of the psytrance artists and track lengths and did not find anything significant. When comparing track lengths, number of sections and number of breakdowns between British and non-British artists, the non-British artists' tracks were an average of 30 seconds longer and had slightly less segments and breakdowns.

These results could just be a result of how the tracks were chosen, however. For the British tracks I chose a handful of tracks by well-known psytrance producers from the website Beatport (Beatport.com n.d.) and producers known to me through friend groups, trying to capture a variety of substyles within the sample. For the non-British tracks I used the website Ektoplazm (Basilisk n.d.) to search by country of origin and substyle and choose a sample that had a range of countries of origin and styles. Ektoplazm (ibid) is a site giving access to thousands of free psytrance tracks, so there are many lesser known artists on this site whereas Beatport (ibid) is a major commercial electronic music site, with well-known artists catering to a broad spectrum audience and likely to have more 'mainstream' styles. Mainstream artists tend to write in a more formulaic manner: many sections with crowd-pleasing, exciting build-ups, breakdowns and bass drops. It is possible that lesser known artists with little to no following will be less likely to write catering to a mainstream audience. I realised that I would need a much wider selection of tracks in my sample to be able to draw reliable data and so moved away from this quantitative analysis, whilst retaining the qualitative, descriptive track analyses I had conducted on a handful of British tracks and using this to inform my chapter on UK psytrance (see the first table in Appendix A2 'UK-Musical Expression').

1.0c. Word Frequency Charts

I used PsyDB.net (Tarski 1995-2009), a database of psytrance music to gather the hundreds of text-based samples listed there. These were organised in Excel and imported into QSR NVivo for analysis. I produced a word frequency chart for all the samples then divided the artists into British and non-British artists and produced word frequency charts representing each, to see if there was a noticeable difference in the themes. The themes were largely the same, apart from the presence of the word 'God' in the overall and non-British charts and not in the British only chart and the presence of 'experience' in the British chart and absence in the non-British chart. This is barely significant, but loosely supports my own view that there are more spiritual themes present in psytrance from other countries than in that produced in the UK and that the UK has a spirit of introspectiveness in its music.

1.1 Questionnaire

In order to address the main question of how regional styles of psytrance develop, I formulated sub-questions, asking whether certain stylistic traits in psytrance music can be tied to geographical locations and what musical characteristics differentiate regional styles of psytrance. I decided to set up an online questionnaire for psytrance music producers and DJs, the source of psytrance music, which asked them about working practices, notions of what is psychedelic in music and regional styles. I was looking for possible differences in working style, equipment and notions of the psychedelic between British and non-British participants. I received responses from 69 participants, most of whom were male and around half of whom were British. Charts showing participant classification data can be found in Appendix D.1.

The online survey was done via Surveymonkey.com and the responses were imported into QSR NVivo, a CAR (Computer Assisted Research) qualitative research software, for analysis. I contacted potential participants by inviting them on Facebook.com, Twitter.com and also by posting in forums such as Psymusic.co.uk, Isratrance.com and others. The invitation linked to my WordPress.com blog where more details concerning the research were provided along with a link to the Surveymonkey site. Documents concerning how the project was structured, the subject area and how information would be used were provided on the blog post, along with instructions on how to consent to participate, by completing the final question within the Surveymonkey questionnaire. Participants were advised that the survey was confidential and that they could withdraw their consent to participate at any time

by navigating away from the SurveyMonkey site. I then logged into the SurveyMonkey questionnaire periodically and deleted the incomplete surveys.

Appendix B1 contains detailed information on the design of the questionnaire, which I will summarise here. The online survey was limited to 10 questions and one of these had to be devoted to obtaining consent from the participants on how the information could be used, whilst questions 1-4 were spent establishing basic details about the participants. So taking into account the 5 questions establishing case details and consent, there were 5 left to ask participants about their music. Questions 5-9 also appear in the one-to-one interviews, though they are worded in a simplified way for the online survey as there is no opportunity to ask for clarification on a question in the online format and also because for many people the written format can involve more cognitive exertion than oral communication (see further reasoning below). The rationale for these five questions appearing in the online survey and the one to one interviews will be discussed first and then the questions specific to the one to one interviews will be addressed.

As Arksey notes, it is important that questions are well designed because bad questions will produce bad data (1999). The online survey questions were therefore worded carefully, largely following guidance by Sue & Ritter (2012), who helpfully list the basics for survey questions which assist in making them understood by participants for example, asking questions in full sentences ("What is your age?" rather than "Age?"), keeping questions succinct and asking one question at a time wherever possible, rather than having questions with multiple parts (Sue & Ritter, 2012). The online survey was completely anonymous and in addition to this, in order to collect case data whilst being sensitive about personal details I included a range of ages and included an option of 'n/a or rather not say' under gender. I wanted to have this information to see if gender or age factored into what participants viewed as 'psychedelic' and what their creative practices were. This was in order to answer the question about how local culture may feed into regional music styles and obviously gender and age have different connotations in different cultures. I then wanted to find out whether participants were British or not, and if not British, where they were from. This was so I could divide up the data into British and Non-British and see if they had characteristics particular to those categories. I asked whether they were resident in the UK as the psytrance scene is very international and has developed and spread through travel and nomadic lifestyles, so it was likely that there would be Non-British producers answering the questionnaire who lived in the UK and may be influenced by the culture there. I made the question about whether they were a DJ or producer as inclusive as possible, as I wanted responses from people at any level of proficiency in writing or DJing psytrance and also

responses from people who perhaps had written or DJ'd psytrance in the past but had moved on to other genres - both interesting perspectives offering a potential formative or critical response that may not have otherwise been forthcoming.

When asking about the hardware in question 5 (question 3 in the one to one interviews - see list below), I thought it may be possible to gather more information about the producer or DJ's creative practice, as different software and hardware represent different ways of working, some more experimental or intuitive and some more structured. For example, Ableton Live is considered more intuitive than Logic Pro, due to its arrangement screen, which takes you away from a linear representation of the track you are working on and allows you to try out bits of thematic material and improvise with them like playing a musical instrument so that you can decide how you want the track to progress. Another example would be whether a producer was using pre-set sounds or engineering their own sounds which might indicate whether they were working in a very detailed and technical way or focussing on the arrangement of the track as a whole in a way similar to composers working in any musical style. The questions relating to creative practice and to hardware and software and how they shape the creative process were influenced by the work of Gelineck and Serafin (2009). Their paper explores 'unpredictable' versus intuitive styles of composition and the concepts of 'explorer' and 'worker' approaches to writing. Compatibility with other systems was important as was being able to adjust the interface and creativity arose from the unpredictableness of software that interplayed with the ideas of the composer to trigger new ideas - both similar findings to those of Bertelsen et al (2009).

Question 6 (question 12 in the one to one interviews) asks about their favourite producer, but gives space for an extended answer to capture any other comments they have or provide several artists if necessary. This question was asked in order to find out what nationality the favourite artists are and see if that influences their musical style. The thinking behind the question is to do with the first research question; looking for a mechanism by which global style influences local style and vice versa. If an artist from a particular region influences the composition style of an artist from another region, this could be a means by which that cultural exchange occurs.

Question 7 (question 8 in the one to one interviews) addresses whether there are regional kinds of 'psychedelicness' - a particular psychedelic quality to the music that is specific to a particular location. This also goes towards answering the first research question as if countries or regions have their own 'psychedelicness' this is another indication of a local style that can be differentiated from other regional styles. The responses to this question,

along with the responses to this same question from the one-to-one interviews with producers, were analysed using QSR NVivo.

Question 8 (question 7 in the one to one interviews) explores this further, providing insight into what influences artists in their day to day practise, something that may be very personal with each individual or for which there might be a particular trend in a specific region. I was influenced by Bennett in looking at composer's embodied experience (1976). He interviewed composers and investigated the required conditions for composition to take place, the process of composition and posited types of composition/composer as 'inspirational' or 'working'. One of Bennett's interviewees mentions how composition is almost a meditation and the paper quotes Bernstein who describes his process more explicitly as a trance state. This seems to fit the 'inspirational' type of composer/composition and is very relevant to the composition of psychedelic trance in that the purpose of the music is to induce or enhance a trance state.

One of the questions I posed for this study was whether there might be a predominate tendency towards one of these composer/composition types in different regions, one that would go towards a particular psychedelicalness and be involved in the formation of a local style. It was important to me to establish what the experience of the interviewee/respondent was as a composer. This provides a link to the other phenomenological research (the practise based research using Ableton Live and technical forum on Psymusic.co.uk) and also the earlier findings about British psytrance and 'internal body psychedelicalness' in Chapter 2 and the psychoactive substance enhanced, trance-dancing body in Chapter 3. The prompt included altered psychedelic states among others, in order to give 'permission' for participants to mention this whilst not pushing them to talk about doing something potentially illegal if they preferred not to. I felt it necessary to give this prompt though as producers and DJs of psytrance are after all composing music or sets for a scenario where people will inevitably be under the influence of psychedelic psychoactive substances and where the music which accompanies that experience hopefully enhances it as well.

Question 9 (question 15 in the one to one interviews) aimed to prompt responses about stand out regional styles around the world i.e. the most distinctive ones, and give space for an extended response. I considered asking participants about the British style and scene but wanted to be careful not to direct participant's answers towards that topic and make them feel that the 'right' answer would be to theorize or reflect on the subject of my research, rather I wished the research to be guided by the participants' responses. As Brinkmann states "Researchers aiming for discovery need to design their research study in such a way that the discovery is not merely an artefact of the study itself" and so it is important to avoid

leading questions (2013). The thinking behind looking for descriptive responses rather than theorizations, was this would tell me just as much about the artist's local cultural influences as a direct question relating to their locale would. I aimed to gain understanding by immersing myself in music production culture and practice, to ensure that the research was led by discovery of emergent experiences and grounded in the reality of the practice informed research and life worlds of participants rather than imposing a theorization on the project. The use of this method meant that I could gain more insight without having to be too specific about British or regional styles in the online survey.

Participants in an online survey cannot refute a particular interpretation by an interviewer in the same way as in a one-to-one interview, so the idea was to give participants as much room to justify their answers as possible. The approach to this question in the one-to-one interviews was different as, for example, I asked participants about the British scene directly, but the different mode of interviewing allowed me to seek a nuanced answer and to explain that any or no answer would be satisfactory. This helped me to avoid collecting 'non-attitudes', that is forcing an opinion from the interviewee when they do not have one. Hopefully this method helped to extract genuine points of view uninfluenced by social desirability issues such as the wish to be seen as informed on a subject, or the wish to help me by providing an answer when in fact they have no opinion. I have to say that the one-to-one interviews did become more relaxed and unstructured as the project progressed and I was less cautious about giving my own opinion on psytrance (see next section for details).

The language used in the online survey is also more colloquial and avoids jargon, partly because having advertised the survey on sites like Psyforum and Isratrance with an international membership, I knew that it would be answered by participants whose first language was not English and partly because there is no recourse for seeking clarification on a question on the online survey. Also, as Wengraf points out, it is important to match the idiolect of the participant so as not to distract from the interview questions and the flow of the interview by being 'culturally clumsy' (2001). In addition to this many people do not express themselves in the best way when writing, which can be for a number of reasons, including that they are not used to expressing themselves in writing in everyday life, or have a specific learning difference (SpLD) of some kind. I also did not wish to alienate participants with language that was overly academic (Kvale and Brinkmann 2009, Brinkmann 2013).

1.1a. Question 7

I asked a range of questions about working practices, audio techniques and the hardware and software they used, but came to focus on three of the questions in particular, which

elicited responses about the experience of music and musical characteristics such as question 7: “Which elements of psytrance music make it sound psychedelic?” The responses were coded (categorised) under the following parent nodes (categories) and child nodes (sub-categories), which I decided upon after an initial read-through of the data. The child nodes were formulated from the participants’ responses and I tried to make them quite specific so as to be led by the data whilst coding. There is some researcher bias with these of course, especially where I grouped together several similar words that appeared in responses e.g. under ‘composition techniques’, where a child node is listed as ‘soundscape, landscape, atmosphere’. The mark of the researcher is more apparent in the parent node categories, where a large group of child nodes are brought together under each one.

TABLE 1: Q.7 Parent and Child Nodes

Artist or subgenre mentioned
Intention of producer Liveness Particular subgenres or artists
Audio techniques
Amplitude Modulation Audio techniques - general reference Automation Creative, Interesting and-or Skilled Sound Design Delay, feedback delay or grain delay Filters Flangers Formants Frequency Modulation Granulation LFOs Modulation Panning Phase Resonance Reverb Sound Design
Brain, mind or spiritual

Brain, mind, acceleration, elevated consciousness Inner journey, introspection, imagination or mind manifestation Spirituality, shamanic, vibration Trance induction and hypnosis
Composition techniques
Composition- general reference Conveying message or meaning Harmony, harmonic coherence Melodies Non-Western culture references Novelty, shock or surprise Repetition or loops Soundscape, landscape, atmosphere Subtlety, nuance Telling a story, narrative, aural journey Tension and release Track structure or arrangement Using the full frequency spectrum
Embodied experience, effect on listener body
Communitas whilst dancing to the music Induces emotional response Liquid, wet sounds, bubbling, squelches, body noises PAS use Recreating the PAS experience Synaesthesia, colours, shapes, patterns, geometric Tactile, texture, felt in the body
Instrumentation, voices or layers
Any element excluding bassline Bassline, kick drum Drone or ostinato Glitches Groove High frequency sounds

<p>Layers</p> <p>Leads</p> <p>Long 'space-like' sounds or pads</p> <p>Rhythm, percussion</p> <p>Roland 303 or 808</p> <p>Samples</p> <p>Sound Effects</p> <p>Synths</p> <p>'Typical' trippy or enigmatic psy sounds - general reference</p>
No answer, subjective etc.
<p>No, no answer or not sure</p> <p>Subjective or linked to expectations</p> <p>Undefinable</p>
Qualities or moods
<p>Abstractness</p> <p>Artificiality, other, other worldly, synthetic</p> <p>Complexity, Intricacy</p> <p>Experimental, unpredictable, original, irregular, free thinking stream of consciousness</p> <p>Playfulness, trickery, magic or cheeky humour</p> <p>Twistedness, subversion</p> <p>Uplifting mood</p>
Space, time, movement, direction
<p>Fat, deep</p> <p>Flow, continuous movement</p> <p>Forward movement, driving movement</p> <p>Gradual, building, growing introduction & change of sounds & themes</p> <p>Many moving elements</p> <p>Rolling, e.g. rolling bassline</p> <p>Sense of movement</p> <p>Sense of space, depth</p> <p>Sounds which change over time or drawn out sounds</p> <p>Spiralling</p> <p>Sweeping</p> <p>Twisting</p>

The charts in Appendix D3 represent my findings for question 7. To summarise, the features which British and the non-British producers and DJs found psychedelic were largely the same but were ranked differently in my data, i.e. some categories had more mentions in one set of data the other. However there were a couple of notable exceptions where certain categories of characteristics featured more prominently for one set of data. 'Audio Techniques' were one of the highest ranked parent nodes in the British data, along with 'Qualities or Moods' and 'Instrumentation, Voices and Layers'. The 'Audio Techniques' parent node, was in the mid-range of the parent nodes spread for non-British producers but was high in the range of child categories in the British data. In terms of the child nodes for the British producers, rated first were 'Creative, Interesting and/or Skilled Sound Design', 'Delay, Feedback, Grain Delay' followed by 'Filters and Modulation'. In the non-British data the highest rated characteristics were 'Delay, Feedback, Grain Delay' followed by 'Filters and Modulation' and thirdly, 'Creative, Interesting and/or Skilled Sound Design'.

In addition, among the child nodes, both British and non-British rated 'Playfulness and Humour' and 'Experimental and Unpredictable' as being very psychedelic musical traits but a notable difference was that British participants also rated 'Bassline and Kick' as being very important. In terms of the parent nodes the British respondents seem to value more technical and audio based elements in their music. The importance of 'Bassline and Kick' in the child nodes of the British data reflects the characteristics of the more popular and prevalent style in the UK, the London sound, which typically features heavy and driving basslines.

In the non-British data, the highest parent nodes were 'Instrumentation, Voices and Layers', followed by 'Composition Techniques' and thirdly, 'Qualities and Moods'. The highest-rated child nodes for 'Instrumentation Voices or Layers' in the non-British data was firstly 'Sound Effects' second, 'Rhythm, Percussion' and third, 'Bassline and Kick-drum'. In the British data inverse was true, with 'Bassline and Kick-drum' coming first, as outlined above. For 'Composition Techniques', the highest child nodes in the non-British data were jointly firsts, 'Track Structure or Arrangement' and 'Soundscape, Landscapes and Atmosphere'; 'Repetition and Loops' came third. In the British data 'Repetition and Loops' came first and the second most mentioned category was 'Soundscapes Landscapes and Atmosphere'.

For the parent node 'Qualities and Moods' in the British data, the most mentioned psychedelic qualities were firstly, 'Experimental, Unpredictable, Original, Irregular, Free-thinking, Stream of Consciousness', while 'Playfulness, Trickery, Magic, and Cheeky Humour' came second and third, 'Artificiality, Other, Other-worldly, Synthetic'. In the non-British data, 'Experimental, Unpredictable, Original, Irregular, Free-thinking, Stream of

Consciousness’ also came first, followed by ‘Abstractness’ and lastly ‘Artificiality, Other, Other-worldly, Synthetic’.

The parent nodes ‘Embodied Experience, Effect on Listener Body’ and ‘Brain, Mind or Spiritual’, both appeared in the middle of the data for both British and non-British producers. With ‘Embodied Experience, Effect on Listener Body’, the British producers cited ‘PAS Use’ as making music sound psychedelic, followed by ‘Liquid, Wet Sounds, Bubbling, Squelches, Body Noises’ and lastly, ‘Synaesthesia, Colours, Shapes, Patterns, Geometric’. The non-British data placed ‘Liquid, Wet Sounds, Bubbling, Squelches, Body Noises’ at the top of their most psychedelic noises followed by, jointly, ‘PAS Use’ and ‘Synaesthesia, Colours, Shapes, Patterns, Geometric’.

For ‘Brain, Mind or Spiritual’, the British child nodes were joint first and second, ‘Brain, Mind, Acceleration, Elevated Consciousness’, ‘Trance Induction and Hypnosis’ and third ‘Inner Journey, Introspection, Imagination or Mind Manifestation’. For the non-British producers, the child nodes were ranked firstly, ‘Trance Induction and Hypnosis’ and jointly, second and third ‘Brain, Mind, Acceleration, Elevated Consciousness’ and lastly ‘Inner Journey, Introspection, Imagination or Mind Manifestation’. Again this equates with my own personal views on the difference between British psytrance and psytrance from other countries, that there is more of a focus on the spiritual and ritual aspects in non-British scenes and more of a focus on brain and mind over spirit in British psyculture.

1.1b. Question 6

Appendix D2 visually represents the responses to question number 6, which asked for participants’ favourite artist. I split the data again into British and non-British respondents, and went through noting the nationality of each artist and the style of Psytrance. In terms of the genres, in the British data psytrance came first, followed by Darkpsy and then ‘Dance/Electronic’ and ‘Don’t Know’. In the non-British data, again, psytrance was first followed by Goa, then Darkpsy and lastly Down-tempo/ambient. The selection of the genre for each artist is a factor in how these categories have been ranked, as I used a variety of online sources, such as Beatport (Beatport.com n.d.), Ektoplazm (Basilisk n.d.) and psytranceguide.com (Sokolovskiy n.d.), as well as artist’s own Facebook pages (Facebook.com n.d.), Discogs (Discogs.com n.d.) entry and information given on their label’s websites. Some of these sources only gave ‘psytrance’ as a genre, where other sites were much more specific about subgenres. Where there was a more specific subgenre given I applied that, but that ‘psychedelic trance’ in itself is a category within psytrance according to some, particularly psytranceguide.com (ibid n.d.), which the author associates specifically

with UK psytrance. Some psytrance producers and psytrance scholars have begun to use the term 'psychedelic dance music' or PDM instead of psytrance to refer to the wider meta-genre, as this acknowledges the blurred line between outlier subgenres like ambient/down-tempo or commercial trance music, where many of the central traits that psytrance fans would consider to be vital in terms of categorising music as psytrance, may be absent. It also takes into account how psytrance as a meta-genre seems to co-opt other genres and 'psychedelicate' (Lindop, 2010) them as a means of survival. Personally I am not sure that there should be a distinction between psytrance as a meta-genre and psychedelic trance as a subgenre within that, but certainly there is a popular, full-on, mainstream style of psytrance and people in the scene will understand what you are referring to when you say 'psytrance' instead of qualifying it with a sub-genre prefix. With the countries of origin, for the British most of the artists mentioned were British, secondly Russia. For the non-British data, again, their favourite artists were by far British, followed by artists from Switzerland and finally, in joint third, Israel and Macedonia.

1.1c. Question 9

Appendix D4 visually represents the results of Question 9, about whether there are distinct regional styles. In the British data the most mentioned distinct regional style was Finnish Suomisaundi, followed by 'Don't Know', with Israeli Full-on coming in fourth. Interestingly, there was only one reference to UK as a distinct regional style. For the non-British producers highest answer was, no, there are not distinct regional styles, followed by Israeli Full-on and then 'Yes', with no regional style specified and lastly Goa and Suomisaundi jointly.

I then looked at the countries that were mentioned as having distinct styles. For the British data the most often mentioned country was Finland, home of Suomisaundi, followed by, jointly, 'No' and Russia, with Israel, South Africa, and the UK being mentioned in fourth place. In the non-British data most distinct style was from Israel, the second most frequent answer was 'No, there are no regional styles' followed by, jointly, Germany, India, South Africa, the UK and the answer 'Yes' on its own.

The above is interesting, considering the question about favourite artists resulted in mainly UK artists being favoured. Despite this UK style seemed difficult to discern in terms of specific characteristics or being a stand-out style in a range of well-known regional styles.

1.2 Interviews

I undertook my first three interviews with psytrance producers, asking similar questions to the questionnaire and extending beyond the scope of that tool through asking semi-structured questions. After reading and analysing statements of my interview and questionnaire participants, in relation to for example, soundscapes and quirky noises, I decided to analyse some of the characteristic sounds which fill the sound-stage of the psytrance musical ecology. I kept the statements of my participants in mind during this second stage of analytical listening and found that they correlated in a number of ways. I applied concepts from the embodied phenomenology of Merleau-Ponty and other scholars to my findings and this formed the basis of Chapter 2, which looks at sound objects, space and the concept of the virtual (in the psychological sense) space in psytrance music and how this relates to embodied experience.

I sought out female participants, because I noticed in the survey that I had very few non-male respondents and I thought it important to hear the voices of artists of different genders. I initially interviewed Lainey Round, a young, female psytrance producer that I had heard of through friends in the psytrance scene but hadn't spoken to before, via skype. I then interviewed Sam Langan, a young, male producer in person, someone who I already knew through the Brighton psytrance scene. The third interview was with Chris, a 40-something male producer and academic took place via Skype: this person responded to a call for participants I sent out through Facebook (Facebook.com n.d.) and via Twitter (Twitter.com n.d.). From these interviews I gleaned a lot of technical information about how these participants make music as well as experiential reports on writing music and writing music for audiences and spaces.

I went on to conduct five more one-to-one interviews but after reflecting on the data gathered so far and the theory I had been reading around embodied phenomenology, I recognised two threads of research emerging, one that was focussed on the music, on producers and DJs and the technology they use and another more expanded view, looking at all the sensory experiences to be had at psytrance parties and looking at how stylistic traits are reflected in all the different sensory domains. For this second thread, I needed to speak to people who could describe how the party décor is designed and made and provide insight into how the parties are organised. I also wanted to speak to at least one dancer and/or flow artist, who had specialist vocabulary around those skills and could recount their experiences on psytrance dancefloors in those terms. An approach from embodiment could have included technology as an extension of embodiment, but I felt that this area alone could comprise an entire thesis and I also didn't feel I had learned enough about the technology used to compose the music to write authoritatively about it. Recognising this gradual shift

into an approach from embodiment taking in all sensory modes, I expanded the pool of participants to include a décor artist, an artist manager and stage manager, a dancer and flow artist and a long-time scene insider and author. See Appendix B for more information on the design of the interviews and Appendix D to read the interview transcripts.

The seven one-to-one interviewees were acquaintances I had met through my involvement in the psytrance scene, or that I had heard of through shared friends. I contacted them by email initially to request an interview. The interviews were either in an informal face-to-face setting or via Skype (Skype.com n.d.). Once an interview had been agreed a date and time was arranged and information and consent forms were signed and returned by participants – I also accepted consent given within the body text of an email.

I asked a friend from the psytrance scene who I knew to be a dancer and flow artist to participate because I knew that she would be able to articulate her embodied experience on the dancefloor in a ready and detailed way. I then turned to the surrounds of the dancefloor and approached a friend from the Brighton scene who designs and installs décor for parties at home and abroad, knowing they would be able to inform my writing on space and place as well as giving dimension to my writing on the virtual world of the dancefloor.

Once I had the view of artists working in different sensory domains, I decided to approach people with knowledge of the organisation and business side of parties – something that in itself has a great impact on what artists play where, on which venues are chosen and with a historical view on how parties and the scene in general have involved over time. I approached a well-known female artist liaison manager who is also a DJ and stage manager and has been organizing parties and dealing with artists for many years. The final participant was an acquaintance from the Brighton scene who had been heavily involved in making parties in the Kent area during the early to mid-2000s. This person was also a writer on the subject of psychedelic experience and so again, not only would they provide valuable data on a period of time in UK underground psytrance history, but, I hoped, would also be able to relate it in a way that would enrich the embodied approach was taking in my writing.

I used the same list of questions in the early interviews as I did in the questionnaire, but added some questions. The later interviews with non-music producers included similar questions, but tailored to different sensory domains fitting the person I was interviewing and also expanded into unstructured conversation around any interesting talking points that arose. For example, rather than asking Mariam about writing practise in composition, we talked about her practise when dancing in different settings and the kind of preparation she

does beforehand. Some musical questions were asked in the non-producer interviews however, such as whether they had a favourite artist or substyle.

Questions 16-18 ask directly about whether there is a British style and what that might be and also whether there are styles particular to regions within the UK. This direct questioning was avoided in the online survey as mentioned earlier, because I did not wish to force an agenda on the participants by asking leading questions. In this mode of interviewing I felt that this might be more appropriate as it could be added on at the end as an 'out of interest' question and posed in such a tone and with body language to indicate that it was not a given that there is in fact a UK style or regional style and if the participant was hesitant in their answer then reassurances to that effect could be given, avoiding false positives.

All the responses to the online survey and the interviews were imported into QSR nVivo and were 'coded' (a process of gathering material by topic, theme or case) into 'nodes' (containers for coding material that is related). A series of queries were run to analyze the data, for example word frequency queries for a particular question across all interviews and online survey responses. Reports and analysis of the online survey data will follow, then the one to one interviews, the interviews and the survey data combined and finally the combined data will be analyzed and discussed in the light of the results from the tracks analysis and practice based research.

I asked producers how they compose their music, including their creative processes, what technologies they use and what inspires them. DJs were asked how they choose tracks and mix them for their performance sets, again looking at creative processes and working practices. I spoke with DJs and producers about how trends in British psytrance have changed over time and how notions of psychedelicalness in the music have evolved. I chose to do interviews and a survey to gather information about Britishness in psytrance music and spoke to producers about their creative practice and what is 'psychedelic' to them about the music they write. The research project was entitled 'Psytrance, Creativity and Psychedelicalness' and the description of it given in the information sheet was almost entirely the internal aims of this particular research project and not the whole thesis, as this obviously mentions 'Britishness' and the global and local - I did not want to unduly influence participant responses by making this information too prominent. Details about how the study fit in to the larger thesis were provided within the information though, in order to be ethical and fully disclose the purpose of the study.

As I mentioned above, my interviews became less structured and more conversational as time went on and I wasn't as careful about not sharing my own views with the interviewee. I

felt that I had collected and analysed data in a more structured way when conducting the online questionnaire and wanted to elicit different responses from interview participants as time went on. I instead tried to tailor my approach to each person I spoke to, for example, if they had an academic background I did not shy away from using some academic terminology or explaining a concept that I wanted to ask about.

In the end, although I looked at the online questionnaire data and interview data together, represented it in various ways and let the study as a whole inform my writing, I felt I had too much information to work with in detail. I therefore chose to focus on the responses to the three most pertinent questions about producer's creative process, whether they believed there were regional psytrance styles and what elements of their music they deemed the most psychedelic. As the interviews progressed I used each to inform my approach to the next, branching out to speak to people with different roles in the UK scene. When I analysed the online questionnaire data together with the interview data in QSR NVivo, I only used the interviews with producers and looked at the same three key questions, so their responses are included in the graphs in Appendix D. I then read through each of the transcribed one-to-one interviews and analysed them in detail separately, using information from any of the question responses to inform my writing.

In the case of the one-to-one interviews, I sent a transcript to each person for approval, destroying the audio recording of the interview so that they would have full control of the information they chose to provide. Participants edited their transcripts for clarity in some cases and added information that they had thought about since the interview and wanted to include.

1.2a. Main Findings of Interviews

I drew out themes from the key statements in the interviews and organised them under themes, which either became areas of interest for research or supporting statements for findings I had already made. The key areas of research and findings follow, with some example quotations.

1.2a. i. Personal identity

This is how the personal identity of a composer/producer affects style development, e.g. a person's prevailing mind-set or their health. Sam said "Each different 'period' of writing over the last 7-8 years has pretty much reflected where I was at the time mind-set wise." Chris recounted that:

"My identity, I was really keen on technology so all my sounds I would try to make sounds that hadn't been made before, hadn't been heard before. I was listening to various old electronic music records, some of those one on the Turnabout series from the 60's, and Stockhausen sort thing and trying to re-synthesise some of the most outrageous sounds that those guys used to make, and when you re-synthesise you can move them and change them around so trying to synthesise really complicated sounds, rich visceral things and move the sounds in order to move people directly."

1.2a. ii. Composition practice

This could be what time of day or night they typically write music, whether they use a Psychoactive Substance to do so. Lainey talked about how she plays to her strengths when composing:

"...generally I do have a set way that I start which is...start with the kick and the bass, because we need that framework. The way I work is, principally my main strength lies in making melodies, so what I then do is start writing melodic parts, sort of overlaying lots of melodies over other melodies so that they all sort of link together - sort of counter melodies that go with - you know, just building it up vertically."

Sam talked about how isolation and relaxing psychoactive substances create the right conditions to work in: "Alone, late in the evening or at night is when I work best. I'm usually stoned - maybe the odd time Valium's been conducive for it as well." Chris felt similarly:

"I tend to work in the evening and at night and certainly quite a lot of starting at 10, 11 and then going through until 9 in the morning, that sort of thing. Why? Well one of the reasons is you certainly get fewer distractions; you don't get people popping in, or phoning you up, or emailing you. You get naturally away from distraction, which is quite important because you need to take ideas and follow them through."

1.2a. iii. Influences of other genres/artists

This can be which music a composer/producer listens to, what they are inspired by. Sam explained:

"I don't have a fixed process. I might just be walking around during the day and a little snippet comes into my head and I think "I'll try that at home later". Or, I might hear some other psytrance artist and like a technique or a sound they use and think "That'd be good to try", or it might even be something from a completely different genre."

Equally, this could involve making effort to be different from other artists. Sam felt that -

"...it's very, very hard to tell where it can go, what can happen and that's why I often find that the people who try and make their music to what is currently popular never succeed, because it takes for five years a few to develop your style so what most people don't know is people who are now popular, they've been doing this for the last five years, developing that sound, making that tune, doing everything - and what they've got now is a finished product. People who are hearing it now say "Well, I'll do that" but quite often it can take them another five years on top of that to develop that

style, so they either come out with stuff that isn't that good or by the time it is good enough, that style has really gone and the next thing has come along and they go chasing that."

1.2a. iv. Working with others

Interviewees explained that when working with other musicians, each person has a role to play, such that a style develops between two people that is distinct from that which develops when they write individually. Chris suggested that style develops -

"Just by virtue of the fact that you were working with so many different people. You picked up the tricks. It's hard to say whether there's an overall style, or whether your style is made up of small elements of this, that or the other. There are killer little details that you might pick up from somebody working. For example, if you put on a bit of reverb on a hi-hat then it just makes the whole track sound better. Somebody else has worked that out and it might be something that you use and it might change a certain element, it might do something to the way that you're making music but it's a small detail and it's not overriding. If you take all those little things together and you A/B something from one time period and something from another incorporating lots of little you might see significant stylistic changes."

1.2a. v. 'Buddying' aspect of learning

Interviewees recounted how friends in the psytrance scene showed them how to use a DAW or taught them sound synthesis. This kind of learning may be different to learning music technology in a more general sense at college, for instance - it is genre focused. Lainey said of her writing partnership:

"...currently I'm working with Dreaddean ...Yeah, it's been really, really cool working with him basically, partly because I was getting really lonely. Like really, I was slogging for two years by myself, felt quite isolated it was bloody hard work and I was really actually working myself into the ground with it and pretty lonely, although that was necessary, but it's been great. I've really - it's just changed everything actually, working with him the past... sort of got four tracks together and it's really changed everything... Starting to work with Lain is good timing because it allowed me to keep doing the music but with less intensity. It's like you get twice as much done half the time and also just keep each other sort of morale wise, keep that going."

Sam reported that -

"A friend taught me fundamentals of psytrance – how to write a bassline etc. and I was already familiar with Cubase as I wrote metal tracks with it. Other than that it's been a case of experimenting a lot with writing. Some tips have come from people on online forums but the general attitude is that they had to put in the time and effort experimenting and learning themselves and so should you."

Organising parties, landscaping or creating décor – these require specific skills which are sometimes taught by older, more experienced psytrance enthusiasts to younger people.

Jake remembered how -

“F and F would run around just like, so eager to please the grandfathers of the scene or whatever, you know the people or organisers they saw as being people in positions of power, like proper grown-ups and they’d just be like “Yeah, let’s collect rubbish, let’s do this stuff!” like, really wired running around doing everything they would tell them to do and stuff. Rather than actually even enjoy the party they would be trying to do stuff and from very early on F wanted to be involved somehow, whether that was picking up rubbish to make the place tidy so it was nice whatever, or it was DJing and making music and the parties itself.”

1.2a. vi. The influence of the surrounding culture in which a musician is embedded

The surrounding culture can 'bleed' into writing style, whether be the kind of psychoactive substances available within a particular culture, regional preferences for a specific mood or subgenre of music, or whether music is written in an oppositional way to local culture, as an antidote to city life, for instance. Chris explained how the personal experience of psychoactive substance use by a composer can directly affect style:

“You use those experiences that you might have had under the influence of psychedelics which were absolutely fundamental. I don’t think you can make psychedelic music without having that experience because you don’t know what those sounds you’re making are going to do, how they are going to be listened to.”

Adam talked about how psychoactive substance preference in a region may impact what musical styles become popular:

“It’s all about escapism stepping out of your norm, so the norm is different depending on where you are - for example, in aggressive, hard areas there will be different drugs and music that goes with those. And what drugs are popular in a scene changes as well - I’ve seen it cycle round in a couple of scenes, you know, like, ketamine is really popular for a while and then something else comes in like LSD and that’s the thing everyone’s doing. So that is going to affect what music is popular in a scene as well.”

Sam found more of an oppositional affect in how surrounding culture influences his writing style:

“I don’t think wider culture influences the music really, no. If anything the music is in opposition to all that, because it’s about an escape from that kind of thing – society and the city etc. The whole sort being away at night on my own in a different mind-set is very like, getting away from it. It’s a form of escapism really, isn’t it? Same as people going to the parties to listen to the music.”

1.2a. vii. The embodied experience of music

This category could include how the tempo affects movement when dancing and how this might affect the audience’s preference for music, or whether composers try to replicate the

bodily effects of psychoactive substance experiences in the music. Chris recalled how different elements of his music would affect different body parts:

“The kick drum, you would tune it, get the tuning of the fundamental frequency so you could feel it here or there depending on the frequency, i.e. in the chest or in the belly or anywhere from the pelvis to the neck, and that was quite a few of us used to do that so that’s something where you’re making a direct physical connection to the body and how you want that to be felt really. Music’s not just through your ears, so on the one hand you’ve got the kick drum and the bassline, and the general groove of the track is what helps the body to dance.”

“...You use your hands for that because typically you’re dancing, your body is dancing at this lower speed, and your arms are going a bit faster but it’s your hands that can start to actually embody those sorts of movements which aren’t necessarily metronomic, and that’s important as well. You get to certain moments in a good party where the whole dance floor is just sort of carving out space.”

Maryam said of her dancefloor experiences:

"...as a dancer, I find that when it's a little bit slower there's a little bit more space to experiment and be creating, so when it's really fast it depends on the artist as well, but if it's really fast sometimes there's not enough space in the...Between beats, kind of thing? Yeah, in the phrase... Sometimes the beats can be really fast but the phrases moving over the beats are really big and expansive, so that can be incredible but that doesn't happen too often, it takes quite a skilled artist to pull that off."

1.2a. viii. Visual aesthetic of parties

This is directed by the artists who create the décor and place it into different spaces. It also involves how the décor works with the music to create a virtual, psychedelic world. Adam described his thought process behind the choice and placing of décor at parties:

“Well, we try and create environments and we try and do different styles of environment, so when you go to psychedelic trance party we can decorate and make it look a bit Moroccan, but as long as you’ve always got something - it’s like we use lights to catch something in your eye that gets your attention. So yes you’ve got this sculpted space, but you need something to take your eye, take your mind, so twinkling lights or like the bubbles in the oil wheels that we use.”

“And the idea is as you project from the back of the room onto everything, it gets the people. So then suddenly everyone in the room becomes part of the décor.”

1.2a. ix. Genre crossover

This is where there is audience crossover between genres, e.g. the metal scene and the psytrance scene, as Sam described:

“I was into metal scene and like a lot of other people, got into the psytrance scene as the music had similar characteristics (dark, fast, industrial noise etc.) and it was

another alternative scene. Like the counterculture that's with it is similar to the sort of counterculture of the metal scene."

Jake too noticed this:

"Has anyone talked about how a lot of metalheads have come over into the trance scene? It's funny how there is this fluffy peace and love thing which is probably not the coolest place for metalheads to go and hang out with, but somehow this there is some overlap."

This category can also involve audiences being introduced to a new subgenre via the 'alternative room' at a party, where the psytrance meta-genre develops as a consequence of including sounds from other, usually newly popular, genres.

1.2a. x. Audience identity

This may include the average age of the audience or how diverse the audience is in terms of ethnicity or nationality, for instance. Maryam said of Ozora festival in Hungary:

"I've felt like it was like almost a distilled trance experience, everyone was totally into it...it's a lot more international, so there I felt like the people that were there were the people that were dedicated to trance. So if you go to a UK festival, or a squat party or something, you'll get people there who are really into it, but you'll also get people that have just found this party, let's just go and have a good time."

Robin described the UK psyscene:

"The UK has quite a bit of an older scene, and an older crowd. I don't really go to the squat parties so I don't know what those are like to be fair. Everyone that I know that's doing them and go are old, thirty and up mostly, obviously I have loads of friends that are in their twenties as well but I just find the UK to be much older, I also find them to be a lot more responsible munters. Or shall we say seasoned professionals, haha!"

1.2a. xi. Catering to the audience

If an artist caters towards a particular audience this can direct style development and equally, if they make a conscious decision not to do this. Catering to an audience might include playing the expected tempo or style of music to match the time of day. Chris recounted that:

"...often to get girls on the dancefloor you have to have a little bit of what we used to call "fluffy" stuff. Sounds disparaging but it's not meant to be at all. It's just an observation and that's one thing I would always, I would love to play Benji's stuff because it just appealed across the whole spectrum. Like where Drezz's stuff, I could clear dancefloors, virtually clear them. You'd only have the real crusties with dreads down to their arses. You know, the real psychedelic warriors."

Sam, meanwhile caters to his audience -

"Hardly at all – it's really a hobby for me so I'm not led by pleasing people... The music I've made has never really been accessible music for people. With the music I write at the moment it's downtempo, but it's really dark downtempo and it's psytrance, but it's slowed down psytrance. And a lot of people would probably say "Oh, that's not really psytrance because it's not the right speed" or "This isn't chill because it's too fast" but in the end, at the moment that's the style of music that I enjoy, that's the style of music that I'm playing out, that's the sort of music I'm enjoying making."

Adam described how he caters for the audience in terms of visual aesthetic:

"Well, people see rhythm in numbers and shapes, you know? You have geometric shapes going back to ancient civilisations - like the Egyptians - and you have patterns which are significant and give people a feeling of knowing where they are. It's whatever symbols come from your forefathers and you find significant. I'm not really into all that; I'm a bit more practical, but people in the psytrance scene are into sacred geometry and things like that, so we like to think about our audience and we'll go with those kind of influences."

Jake described the discourse in the scene about what tempo and style of music is appropriate for different times of the day:

"And there was like infinite debates about how the music should be changing through the course of the night to reflect the whatever, so then we kind of like came to this nice little ceasefire: we could have dark or fast or heavy stuff between 1 AM and 4 AM and then when the sun started to come up the beat sort of started to slowdown make it more melodic, more progressive or whatever."

1.2a. xii. Changes in regional style preference

The prevailing popular style in a region may change over time and influence what other styles become popular. Lainey said:

"...I've been going to parties for 10 years and in terms of like events that I've attended, yeah, it's really changed...It's all the dark music that is coming in which I'm really not a fan of and I don't know, yeah the vibe is kind of like a bit more... it's almost like people are doing too many drugs. It's a bit more like...sketchy at some of the events and just disorganised and just not as much respect for the artists...there is still good stuff going on as well. "

Sam's thoughts on this were:

"...Forest and the darker side, [it] certainly seems to be like, gravitating towards the heavier faster darker side of Psytrance in London. They [Bristol] seem to be going towards the darker styles now as well now, a bit more like the London sound."

1.2a. xiii. Space & place

Styles of psytrance may evoke a sense of place and space as well as being considered suitable to be played in that environment e.g. forest style. Chris described his experience writing psytrance: "It was designing music to be listened to, dancing hopefully in a nice field

in the middle of the English countryside with a bloody great big oak tree in the middle of it. Under the influence of LSD, that's it..."

The space and place evoked may be imaginary or virtual, as Sam describes: "The little subtle noises, sense of space. A soundscape, like in a forest with forest creatures appearing at points around you."

The environment and climate of a place may affect what kind of party can take place there. Sam commented that:

"The UK in general seems to like harder, darker, faster music styles – think Drum 'n' Bass and Dubstep for e.g. ...I think it's to do with the setting, the location of the parties - like in London, the urban, the city, warehouses and industrial spaces. In Bristol the lighter styles seemed more popular for a long time, maybe because they have events in really big clubs and there are lots of students so it's a bit more commercial or clichéd."

Robin noted that: "You didn't see as much forest, Hi-Tek or dark trance in the clubs until quite recently and I think that is one that's too much inside of a dark closed space." There are many reasons that factors like this might affect the popularity of a psytrance sub-genre; for instance, if a style of music is only played at outdoor, unlicensed parties and not inside clubs, it may garner more 'underground' appeal.

1.2a. xiv. Countries, Regions & Style

There were statements from interviewees that spoke to the stylistic similarities in psytrance globally. Jake thought that -

"...the most interesting thing about the trance scene is that there's this homogeneity because it's such an international scene that if you go to a party in London it will still be like, 80% people who weren't born in the UK. So it's the same shit wherever you go you go to a party in Slovakia or Germany or Italy or Greece or Portugal or Mexico - whatever - there's this common sort of undercurrent."

Regional stylistic differences were also talked about, especially when the (mostly British) interviewees compared the UK scene with scenes in mainland Europe. A typical UK sound was identified but it was difficult for interviewees to articulate precisely what that entails. The prevalence of the London Full-On style was mentioned as having come to represent the UK sound for a time. Lainey noted that:

"Well obviously every country has a different sound, a different sort of balance of maybe, different subcategories of the psytrance. So say for example London - not a lot of progressive and I just feel like actually a lot of people, kind of some people don't really maybe get my music in a way, because of the whole sort of 'London

sound' and they tend to choose the same DJs. It's this kind of core contingent of people that gets played because there seems to be a particular 'a sound' that people prefer - or that has somehow been decided that "that is the 'London sound'".

Chris described the 'grown-up' yet playful sound of artists like Tristan and Dickster:

"I like some of the West Country stuff, English West Country psychedelic stuff was just brilliant... Some of their stuff, you can definitely hear their characters in that music, crusty, not that they were crusties so to speak but it had this sort of, a bit broken and really, really playful, you'd have a kick pattern established and then they'd just frame it off by half a beat so on the dancefloor you'd have to pitch this thing up again. They would just fool you, mess around with it, you'd think this thing was coming in and then it didn't, then it did. So there was loads of humour loads of really. They were really playful, but not childishly playful, grown up playful... Ken Kesey sort of playful."

Sam also noticed distinct regional styles in the UK scene:

"...what I found quite distinctive myself is the North side have a lot more like, hard elements to it, like hard techno, whereas the South doesn't really have that as much. I don't know whether that you can go with an East and West divide on that as well, but certainly the further up I've gone, the sound has been far more 'in your face', with Hard House or Hard Style influences to it, whereas the South doesn't seem to have that as much."

The UK scene was identified as isolated from the rest of the EU, more expensive and with shorter parties and tighter security. Jake said:

"Well, British festivals are ridiculously expensive to start with - I think they are segregated from the whole European festival circuit and it's a lot easier to make money on the European festival circuit if you're either selling stuff you bought cheap in India..."

EU parties and festivals were characterised as having more freedom, lasting longer and having a more international audience, given that party-goers are able to drive across Schengen borders.

"Nobody European come to British festivals - just because it just doesn't make sense in terms of money. Well, geographically it doesn't make sense... we've got sound control stuff, we've got licensing stuff ...and we have a three-day party maximum... You go to Europe and for the last 20 years they've been having week-long parties ...the sort of gold standard of psytrance parties has been made in Hungary and in Portugal."

Robin agreed that the UK party scene is more static than the party scene in mainland Europe:

"I've been DJ-ing on and off for 20 years so it seems to be the same line-up, the same little family of people and the same of the same. I found that to be in England, a lot different than the other countries. Plus it seems to me a lot of the English don't like to travel to go party, the Europeans move about a lot!"

Jake described a "Big brother atmosphere" at UK parties:

"I think one limitation is that UK festivals have really shit security as well. In almost any country in Europe you can snort drugs openly on the dancefloor...It's like a free party and this is why you go to free parties, because you don't have to look over your shoulder when you have a line or a smoke or whatever and even the most free UK festivals like Glade or like Cosmo just have always have this 'big brother looking over your shoulder' vibe to them."

Jake also made an important observation which suggests how smaller parties in the UK may lead to a particular stylistic trend, whilst larger parties and festivals in mainland Europe might lead to another. He said of Hungary's Ozora festival:

"...it's like there's a menu, you have access to all these other names, all these other different types and styles - there's a whole range of styles that you get. A big festival like that is playing 24 hours for like, seven days or whatever. So you become a bit more discerning and you don't just go to a party for the sake of it being a party, you go to choose a party where there is a particular artist that you're more interested in. I think that a lot of the Kent parties had always just been run by my mates and they'd play for free - and it is the people that make a party, it doesn't really matter, it's the people that come to a thing - but maybe in the summertime it was the beginning of a shift where people would think more about the sort of party they put on."

Whilst the ethos of 'the people make the party' is more apparent to Jake in the UK, some stylistic stagnation seems to come with that. At Ozora, he was able to become more of a connoisseur of psytrance sub-styles and artists.

1.2a. xv. Technology

The advent of downloading music and VST plug-ins changed the market so that making a living entirely from the commercial side of psytrance was no longer viable and record deals became scarce. The instruments used to create the music became virtual and less tactile, with such an array of sounds and capabilities that some feel it stifled creativity in musical style. Having been active in the psytrance scene during the 1990s, Chris noted how the progress of music technology and its increasing availability affected composers' practice:

"If you've just downloaded something from a torrent then you just mess about with, you do this, do that, it's fine, but the value is important, and the number of options is really important. So when you're really limited and you've only got a couple of mono synths and you can't record anything, you can only record the sum total of all your output to a stereo DAT tape which you can't even edit, then you've really got to learn how to use the technology, and how to push the technology. You don't have to stop learning how to push the technology and use it creatively, just because everything's become easy, it's just because everything's become easy you can redo it, you can do computer automation, you can do so much editing. The drive to doing it, why you might want to do it can change and that can really change what you're trying to do so it's a very complicated relationship with the technology I would say."

1.2a. xvi. Commercial aspects of the psyscene

Labels, booking agencies, promoters, crews: these all have an impact on which artists play where and whether an artist's music is released, though as my interviewees have highlighted, their role in the scene has changed over the years. Sam recalled that:

"It's funny, when I was making Darkpsy and I approached parties ... with my Darkpsy I was told "That will be too dark; go away and come back with something a bit more fluffier and lighter"...over the last 4 or 5 years it has been a very big change from what it is now. If I went with the music, maybe not to [name] but some of the other parties, if I went there with the music I used to make, it'd probably be right up their alley now."

Robin talked about the end of 2000s boom in psytrance, where so many artists flooded the market that only the big starts were able to earn money enough to be career musicians and festivals shaped their line-ups, having a huge impact on what music was heard by audiences and had the opportunity to become popular:

"I used to have a booking agency, and I did some bookings for Twisted, TIP, Maia, Organic and Nano Records, and all of this, at that point about seven or eight years ago all the artists I was managing were making two or three thousand a gig you know so that is worth being a manager. But it all changed for many years and fees dropped dramatically...unless they're Dickster, Tristan or some of the more long-standing well-known names ...they weren't barely making over a grand a gig. With so many artists out there and so many festivals with their pre-decided agenda of what style, or what artists they already want, that doesn't really make it as easy for booking managers to get the others gigs."

The way that Robin's booking business operated was to –

"have a handful of people from different styles and not just all psytrance...If they can get a festival to come to them and book ten different artists of ten different styles then they're going to have a bit more influence on that line-up, and what music is presented."

Robin reports that record labels operate similarly, 'collecting' artists from around the globe and curating styles, but she felt that they no longer worked to book gigs for their artists and as the artists are no longer represented by booking agents. These factors could significantly effect which styles are diffused to the global psytrance audience.

Jake described how inter-promoter rivalry could lead to diversification of style and greater quality of music:

"... it was around I would say 2009 - 2010 ...there were a lot of accusations at the time that new promoters were doing it more for the money then for the love of it - I would say a lot of that is jealousy inter-promoter rivalry sort of stuff. And the promoters were also doing stuff that clearly people wanted them to do - you want to see more and just the same DJs every single week was a bit crap, in any old warehouse...so I think between like 2010 to 2012 there was quite a lot of innovation, there was people putting on quite high production parties with a lot of good people and stuff and there was competition as well between them, I guess. It's a good thing

that there will be competition to make the biggest names and have the cool stuff, maybe?"

Chris talked about the changing face of the music business and the consumption of music and music technologies:

"...plugins came in at the same time as downloading, downloading screwed the whole thing. All of a sudden you couldn't get a record deal. I was running a label, within the space of about six months you went from having firm sales, to sale or return, to "I'll only order some in if someone goes into a record shop and orders it". So that was game over for making money from records. It was all just downloading so that was it and you don't make money from downloading, not enough to pay anything which is still a problem with music at the moment."

Adam noted that the fact that creating party décor is not profitable has a positive side: "So, we make different sets. We don't give organisers too much choice because it's our creativity at the end of day and we don't get paid much for it - it's for the love of it really so we may as well enjoy creative freedom."

1.2a. xvii. Legislation

There were differing opinions on whether legislation has impacted psytrance style. Sam said:

"I don't think that has really impacted the music because artists play all over the world in different settings and even here in the UK there's usually an underground event going on somewhere not too far away, even if you're playing in a club."

The Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994 s.63 which gave the police "Powers to remove persons attending or preparing for a rave" and the 2006 Health Act which banned smoking in enclosed work places, were both cited as legislation that has impacted the UK underground party scene, and psytrance.

Adam said that when the smoking legislation was enacted:

"...the chill-out rooms changed like that; overnight the vibe changed and it became another dancing space. Calling it chill-out - they stopped and all started calling it an alternative room and I noticed that happened almost on the button of them bringing in the smoking ban - which is really sad."

Jake observed that: "there is an argument to be made that smoking ban encouraged - there was a bit of a peak in squats around...2007-2008 there was a bit of a peak in squat parties because you could smoke there."

Robin said the authorities' role in the decline of the UK psyscene had had -

"...a positive effect in the end in some ways...the one thing I noticed, because all of a sudden everyone was trying to throw a party, so many new crews popping

up...especially many young people with a bit of cash and no experience...not realising the hard work... or new folks who wanted to throw a festival just to make a buck (but with bad budgeting skills lol) and it got to a point where the proprietors were a bit...It kind of washed out a lot of the riff raff because every old person was trying to do something, and it'll be their first event, and they'd be a huge line-up and they said they had the financial backing and then they wouldn't."

Jake noted that legislation can impact on which spaces are used for an event:

"I mean obviously we've got this kind of heritage like the rave scene and we probably have more restrictive laws anyone else and, even now with everything really fucked up, one of the best squat scenes in Europe... I mean like you go to Berlin and you don't have a squat scene so much because the parties go on in legalised, licensed venues - and they have an open-air scene as well."

1.2a xviii. Trance, flow and groove

There were many examples in both the questionnaire data and interviews of participants using these words, but it was particularly the interviews that led to me writing a chapter examining them more closely. Lainey talked about calling the second track she made 'Flow' and this reflecting how she works, completing and releasing tracks without looking for an impossible standard of perfection: letting the music go and retaining creative momentum. Sam mentioned 'groove' when talking about writing a bassline and also described his writing practices in terms of 'flow'. Chris talked about the importance of 'trance' in psytrance and how repetitive body movement can lead to altered mental states, describing how one needs to 'get the right groove' in order to bring this on.

From my analysis of the questionnaire and interview data, and reading around trance states, 'groove' and 'flow', I formulated another sub-question: whether certain psytrance styles might encourage different qualities of trance and whether these different qualitative experiences could be markers of difference between regional styles. I applied theory about trance states, the concept of flow, from positive psychology and the notion of groove as defined in popular musicology the qualitative and musical analysis data I had collected and this resulted in writing Chapter 3, where I ask what these words mean in the context of music and dancing and what this tells us about the embodied psychedelic experience at psytrance parties. In this chapter I suggest that the three descriptive words from my data correlate with different types and intensities of trance, with the word 'trance' being more strongly associated with spirituality, groove with the body and 'flow' or 'the zone' being more associated with a psychological state. These sub-questions derive from the statements of my participants describing their embodied experience of composing, listening and dancing to music and so fall into the second area of inquiry from my adapted communication model for analysing psychedelic music: looking at the subjective effects of music on the listener and/or dancer.

1.3 Participant Observation

Turning to the third area of inquiry in my adapted communication model, I looked at associations with wider culture, spirituality and symbolism and from this, came up with another sub-question, asking what elements of the surrounding culture in which a scene is embedded influence the sound of that region. I read about political and socio-economic issues in some countries that have a vibrant psytrance scene, initially hoping to focus on each in detail and make this thesis a comparative study, however the data I had collected through interviews and the online questionnaire mainly concerned the UK and my own experience of psytrance is limited to the UK, so I felt I could not complete a truly comparative study of psytrance in different geographic regions that would pass muster. Instead, I decided to expound on the wealth of data I had gathered about the UK scene. I read around Britain's national identity, both historical and contemporary and Martin Cloonan's writings on Britishness, with specific reference to suburban life and music scenes. I explored its history of technological innovation, highlighting a valorisation of technical excellence in audio processing and also followed a thread of research into British comedy, guided by the humour I found in listening to British psytrance, identifying grotesque, debased psychedelic sensibilities in British psytrance. This research was the basis for Chapter 4 of this thesis and informed Chapter 5, where I augmented it with my own embodied experiences of the UK psytrance scene. I undertook participant observation at four different events which typify the kind of places and spaces at which psytrance is experienced in the UK.

Chapter 5 is based around four British psytrance events I attended and in each section I have tried to convey a sense of the space in which the party occurred and what it was like to experience that space. The four ethnographic accounts are interspersed with analysis, covering a different kind of space and place, whether indoors, outdoors, licensed or squatted. I looked at photos of some of the parties at a later date to reflect on their aesthetics and have included an example of these in Appendix A.

For the Outdoor Forest-style Party in London, a connection from the psytrance scene sent me a link to a Facebook event page advertising the party, with a link to buy tickets. I took a small pop-up tent to retreat to and used this to periodically reflect on the party and the conversations with attendees. I did not write any notes until I was at home, after the party. For the Indoor Squat Party in London I heard of the event through acquaintances and a friend agreed to accompany me. I immersed myself in the experience whilst there and I did not write any notes until I was at home, after the party. For the Freak Bazaar Club Night at the Volks, Brighton, the event was advertised on Facebook and a friend agreed to

accompany me. Many of the Brighton psytrance events I have attended over the years have taken place in this location so again, I immersed myself in the event whilst there and did not write notes until I returned home. For Noisily Festival, I heard of the festival through acquaintances on the psytrance scene and arranged to attend with a group of friends. Noisily offers many genres of underground dance music - Progressive Techno is the main genre on offer – but the Liquid stage is devoted to psytrance so my focus was on that stage, but it was also interesting to view it in the context of the other genres and the people who had come primarily to hear those genres. I returned to my tent a number of times during the final day of the festival to write my impressions in rough note form and wrote up the ethnographic piece on my return. In most cases I also talked to the people who had attended all the events with me some time afterwards to refresh my memory of the experience and pick up on details I may have missed.

1.4 Reflexive, Mixed-Method Approach

As I progressed through the research methods described above, I reflected on how successful each had been in capturing the information I needed, and adjusted my methods accordingly. I increasingly wanted to interrogate psytrance in a way that does it service in taking into account the embodied psychedelic experience of listening and dancing to music while under the influence of psychoactive substances, as this experience is central to psytrance culture. Many, though not all, psytrance fans use psychoactive substances, which influence the sonic and visual aesthetic of the psytrance party and the ethos of the scene. In psytrance, experience is all, and the more I experimented with different methodologies to collect data, the more aware I became of this, eventually foregrounding the approach from embodied phenomenology and reframing my research within this perspective.

The reflexive process described above drew another research question, asking what research paradigm and methodological approach best serves researchers of psytrance. My experience led me to the conclusion that a multi-pronged methodological approach along with multiple and yet non-competing theories to describe the different aspects of psytrance, was the ideal approach. This last research question formed the basis of chapter 6, where I try to take an overview of the different phenomenological threads of enquiry in the thesis while also arguing for approaches which are multiple, and also resist the urge to draw ‘grand universal theory’ style conclusions. I analysed psytrance through concepts from Sloterdijk’s *spherology* (2011, 2013, 2014, 2016), Novak’s cultures of circulation and feedback (2013), Deleuze and Guattari’s *rhizomes* and *planes of immanence* (1977, 1987) and the notion of *milieu* as defined in the work of scholars like Dürschmidt (2013) and Webb (2010).

Readers will note that although the perspective of this thesis is embodied and experiential, there are instances where I diverge into discussing scientific research. This is because I think having some background knowledge about the science of sound, body movement and perception is essential to understanding both the mental image I have of psytrance and why I am arguing that the body is such an important catalyst in the stylistic development of its musical style. I was inspired to look at psytrance from this perspective initially because of its strong association with psychoactive substances and wanted to understand how their effect on the brain and how they influence the perception of music. When I developed my thoughts about embodiment and the psytrance dancefloor, I found that the field of embodied phenomenology was using empirical data to ground its statements about the nature of embodiment and perception in cognitive science. Therefore, although at times these scientific explanations may seem deviate from the central argument, they arose as result of making embodiment and experience central to my research.

This is an interdisciplinary work, drawing from embodied phenomenology, ethnomusicology, musical semiotics, anthropology, popular musicology, cultural studies, sound studies, cognitive psychology, sociology and, to a lesser degree, research in areas such as political economy and neuropsychopharmacology. There are many benefits in undertaking interdisciplinary work of this kind. As Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi notes “creativity is a process that can be observed only at the intersection where individuals, domains, and fields intersect” (1999: 314). In a similar vein, Mikhail Bakhtin states that “The idea begins to live, that is, to take shape, to develop, to find and renew its verbal expression, to give birth to new ideas, only when it enters into genuine dialogic relationship with the other ideas...” (1984/1993: 88).

However, interdisciplinary research also presents challenges. As Robert Frodeman says, there are two main tasks in interdisciplinary work; firstly, the epistemic task of integrating knowledge from different disciplines and secondly, the political and rhetorical task of communicating such work to different audiences effectively (Frodeman et al. 2017: 4). I aim to resolvesome of these issues through the way I have structured this thesis.

The question of what methodological approach best suits psytrance arose as I was researching my thesis and collecting data, through finding that each of the approaches I undertook was insufficient on its own to capture the psytrance experience, something that I feel is important, given my focus on embodiment, to communicate to readers, many of whom will not have attended a psytrance party. The thesis therefore evolved into somewhat of an exploration of methodologies and approaches in an attempt to capture something of the lived

experience of psytrance culture and a critique of methodologies and approaches undertaken by psytrance scholars so far.

As the reader will find, I am not trying to do a rigorous scientific study but draw from different styles of research and methodologies whilst also being led by personal, embodied experience and intuitive interpretation to give an overall impression. I avoid too much definition because I found the more rigid my methodology the further away my research became from the central experience of trance dancing to music whilst under the influence of psychoactive substances. William Echard (2017) recently published a work on psychedelic music, including psytrance. In Echard's work there is an extra level of rigorousness because he employs topic theory in his analysis, a branch of semiotics. Echard looks at psychedelia in popular music from the 1960s to the 1990s as a subject for topic theory, taking samples of music and album artwork and tracking through some solid instances of tropes in psychedelic music which have passed from decade to decade and from genre to genre. For example, the sound of Morse code which is seen as a kind of broadcasted urgent message, symbolic of the political movement behind flower power and perhaps the idea of turning on "tuning in and dropping out".

Topics are conventions and therefore analysis has to be rigid in order to pinpoint where a signified solidifies as a trope. This is not suitable for all aspects of psychedelic music however. For example, when we move away from analysing songs with lyrics into looking at extended instrumental works and tone or timbral experiments like those found in electronic music, we start to deal mainly in floating signifiers. Further, psychedelic music seems to be about highlighting this move away from anchored signifiers to variable, shifting and highly subjective signifiers, which emphasises the networked interconnectedness of ideas and things that we decode by their difference.

Some of Echard's method is intuitive and interpretative and he acknowledges the importance of experience, stating that psychedelia is not just an aesthetic symbol. Overall though, the work remains very focused on topics and semiotics and not on context and experience - which was the best approach for what he wanted to achieve, as in his own words he says "I chose psychedelia as my case study...because it is a genre with good credentials for studying topicality". He also states that the book "does not try to analyse the aesthetic and emotional landscape of psychedelic music, let alone psychedelic experience", however this is exactly what I am trying to accomplish in this thesis and why I have taken a mixed methods approach.

There is however, some contradiction at play in my use of semiotics whilst building my argument on a foundation of phenomenology. Embodied phenomenology prioritises movement and gesture over words, theorizing that language springs from movement and gesture. Embodied approaches also seek to subvert the reification of language in academia, questioning the mind-body divide that is often apparent in academic texts which are inattentive to or devalue embodied experience. Furthermore, the divide between semiotics and embodied phenomenology illustrates a wider problem in this thesis: the contradiction that comes from mixing structuralist approaches – like semiotics, some of the evolutionary psychology I refer to in coming chapters and the works based in empirical science I reference – and post-modern and de-constructivist ideas that I use, like Deleuze and Guattari's Rhizome and to a certain extent, Sloterdijk's Spherology. In the first chapters of *Music's Meanings*, Tagg criticizes post-modernist writers in the field of popular music, coining the term *pomorockologists*, saying they deny the text and reduce pop musicology to a subfield of cultural studies, where the focus is in music as an oppositional noise. He argues that focusing on the noise of music and its effect on the body to the detriment of all else leads to musical absolutism which empties music of meaning and precludes the use of semiotic analysis (Tagg 2011: 101-15). My answer to this is that the danger of falling into musical absolutism seems to lie in doggedly adhering to one particular approach. I reconcile my use of cultural studies approaches with musical semiosis by accepting the intertextuality of musical texts and the multiplicity of meanings that arise from them. These different approaches cannot then be seen as mutually exclusive and it is possible and to draw from them all insofar as they are useful.

1.5 Ethical Issues

There were three main areas of risk identified in the ethical review process for my research study: risk to interviewees and survey respondents, risk to party organisers and attendees being observed and risk to the researcher. The first concern was over whether it would be possible to link personal data back to questionnaire and interview participants (apart from on their separately stored signed consent forms). The questionnaire respondents were all anonymous as the SurveyMonkey website assigned an identifying code when they undertook the questionnaire. I gave the interview participants the choice whether to be identified, and this was given as a tick-box option on the consent form. Two (Jake and Chris) decided to use a pseudonym, and the rest were happy for their name to be used in the thesis.

Other concerns to do with the questionnaire respondents and interview participants were over the discussion of sensitive topics such as drug use and potentially illegal activities and whether this could be the cause of psychological stress or anxiety, or negative consequences for them. I did not ask the questionnaire respondents about drug use or illegal activities and for the interviewees, I decided to go with the flow of the conversation and see if they were comfortable with discussing those aspects of the psytrance scene. I advised participants that they could withdraw any time up to a few weeks prior to my thesis submission date and also provided reassurance with the way I handled the interview data: I made audio recordings of the interviews, transcribed them verbatim – or as close as possible – and then destroyed the audio recordings. I then sent interviewees the transcript to read and edit as they saw fit – including deleting parts they were no longer comfortable with. In this way interviewees had control over what information would be shared with readers of the thesis. I also reiterated that permission can be withdrawn in future if the participant has a change of mind.

An ethical concern with the participant observation at psytrance events was whether participants would be required to take part in the study without their consent or knowledge at the time (e.g. covert observation of people in non-public places. I advised the ethics committee that there would be no covert note taking or observing from the perimeter, simply participation followed by me recording impressions on note paper either at the close of the event in my tent, or after the event with the use of a flyer and photographs taken by participants to refresh my memory. In all cases, no individual person present was identified (apart from, by implication, myself) and in the case of the illegal gathering, neither the location nor the name of the party organisers was disclosed. The ethnographic pieces were intended to provide a sense of atmosphere, an impression which would elucidate the main body of the text for the reader, rather than to be detailed and comprehensive ethnographic reports.

Finally, there were concerns over the inclusion of an illegal party in the participant observation. I was asked by reviewers to clarify what exactly gave it an 'illegal' status, to consider what consequences that space could have for me as the researcher, to think through alternative measures or support mechanisms should any problems arise and to explain why it was necessary to include this context in terms of how it related to my research questions.

In response to the reviewers I explained that psytrance originated as an underground scene and in continues to operate in that context. After the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act passed in 1994, parties increasingly began to take place in licensed spaces (what I refer to

as a legal gathering) as a matter of necessity but the desirable context is an outdoor gathering or indoor 'squat party' in disused warehouses, for example (which I refer to as an illegal gathering owing to its contravention of the CJA and POA '94, which describes a 'rave' as a gathering of ten or more people with music consisting of a succession of repetitive beats, as well as more recent squatting legislation). A key aspect of psytrance parties is the creation of a Temporary Autonomous Zone, the autonomy being from the institutions of society such as lawmakers, police and the bureaucracy of local councils and licensing laws. Whilst parties taking place in clubs or licensed festivals also create a liminal space by other means, it does not constitute a T.A.Z. in the same way as an illegal gathering. I argued that any research into psytrance, and particularly the UK psytrance scene, must explore the underground and illegal aspects of the scene, as these are vital to its history and to how people currently participate in it. As I am embedded in the UK psytrance scene, I had already attended several illegal parties already and had built up a network of contacts and close friends who accompanied me to them. My experience and that of scene participants, is that in the event parties are shut down by police, party organizers may have their sound system impounded, and/or may be charged for trespassing, whilst party goers are merely dispersed, unless they are searched and/or arrested for the possession of illegal substances – something that was not a risk for me in my role of researcher.

The reviewers eventually reassigned the study as low risk and gave approval because “the participants were consenting adults in Britain” and further because “Even though frowned upon by certain authorities, such musical cultures are an integral part of contemporary popular culture” See Appendix C to view the application form, certificate of approval and retrospective ethical review letter.

1.6 An Embodied Methodology

As described in section 1.4, my methodology has been iterative and exploratory and has found its centre in an embodied approach. As a researcher, one could say, I have not at all times maintained the distance and objectivity that sociological and much anthropological work considers proper (St John 2013). This is difficult for an emic researcher, where study participants cross over with friendships and participant observation in field research errs decidedly on the side of participant. However this thesis is a report of embodied experience and so I feel it has been necessary to a certain degree to transgress some of the boundaries

of academic rigour and systematic approach. Therefore, I take my lead from Donna Haraway when she writes about the balance between maintaining objectivity and obtaining reliable data versus acknowledging the subjectivity of the researcher and being critically reflexive: “one must be in the action, be finite and dirty, not transcendent and clean” (Haraway 1997: 35-36).

St John, the most prolific scholar in the field of psytrance at this time, calls on scholars of EDMCs to “write the vibe”. Drawing from the work of Tami Spry (2001), he reveals that he pursues “writing as a self-reflexive discipline that is not dismissive of sensory impressions” aiming to blend autoethnographic poetry with theoretical prose (St John 2013: np). He advocates for innovative combinations of experiential writing that do not exclude any of the senses and uses different techniques such as ethnographic writing, poetry and more to communicate the experience of the vibe through a radical vulnerability and openness. However, this is with the understanding that the symbolic representation of the vibe cannot be substituted for the direct experience of the vibe itself (ibid 2013) - and with the caveat that it is possible to analyse the joy and meaning out of these kinds of transcendent experiences, as Edith Turner said of her husband’s work (Engelke 2008: 291). St John further emphasises the need for a close understanding of the kind of media assemblages involved in EDMC sites of experience (2013). He employs some of the techniques he is advocating for by including a bricolage of transcribed, spoken word samples which he asserts should be used together with other techniques, including participatory experience where possible, to best transpose the experience of the dance-floor vibe to the reader. He calls for perspectives using these techniques from musicology and phenomenology, among other disciplines, so my work here can be considered a response to this.

As Spry notes, “Ethnography’s distinctive research method...privileges the body as a site of knowing...it is an intensely sensuous way of knowing” (Spry 2001: 180). Citing Linda Park Fuller, she asserts that ethnographic and autobiographical writing often reveal transgressive narratives and so the act of writing them becomes a transgressive and political act against perceived stylistic hegemony in academic discourse. (Park-Fuller 2000: 26, Spry 2001). Such acts are also emancipatory, allowing the expression of affect and emotion that may have been suppressed by mainstream academic approaches to research and writing. She describes such emancipatory writing as knitting back together the body and mind, where mainstream academia has a tendency to separate and valorise the latter over the former. Spry states of autoethnographic performance that it “creates a space for the detached voice and the “profane” body to dialogue, reintegrating the head and the heart into academic writing” (2001: 720).

Spry describes autoethnographic work as resisting the urge to generalize and construct grand theories of everything, which promote a false notion of objectivity and empiricism and devalue the perspective of subjects and instead advocates for work which allows for a multiplicity of truth and meaning. Unlike St John, she rejects the notion that the symbolic representation of experience can never come close to the real thing, stating that through embodied writing the researcher becomes the research; they are “the epistemological and ontological nexus upon which the research process turns” (Spry 2001: 711). The text is inscribed upon the body of the researcher (ibid 2001: 710-11).

Summarizing the ideal requirements for autoethnographic writing, Spry, citing Denzin, asserts that firstly, the writing must be skilfully crafted and able to stand up to academic scrutiny (Denzin 1997: 200, Spry 2001). Secondly, it must be emotionally engaging and “critically self-reflexive of one’s socio-political interactivity”. Thirdly, she cites Goodall (1998) in saying that good ethnography must facilitate meaningful dialogue between reader and author and, again citing Denzin (1997: 200), should be embedded in, reflect and critique the historical moment. Fourthly, as well as telling an engaging and meaningful story, good ethnography should have a persuasive argument, moving the reader emotionally and critically with personal elements and thick description. Such writing can be defined as a *felt-text* that is formed through a dialogic process that allows the ethnographer to present a community to the reader for consideration in a way that speaks *with* and not *for* the subject, thereby revealing heretofore unknown understanding of cultures. This is not a case of the ethnographer ‘going native’, merely of being open to multiple ways of being in the world and different life-worlds. Ethnography comes from a liminal space between experience and language, somatic, body centred experience and the semantic network between bodies (Spry 2001).

A volume which has influenced my thinking with regard to the participant observation and interviews I have undertaken and ethnographic pieces I have written, is *Extraordinary Anthropology: Transformations in the Field* (Goulet and Miller 2007a). The volume promotes the benefits of participatory approaches to the study of cultures that engage in ecstatic practices. Goulet and Miller say that we should be “out of our minds” at least part of the time during fieldwork, with the caveat of maintaining standard ethnographic skills in order to produce well founded results (2007b: 1-13). Amanda Coffey points to the tendency of conventional academic wisdom to dismiss such ecstatic experiences as the ethnographer going native and holds that they should not be dismissed in this way (Coffey 1999: 33). Goulet and Miller agree, asserting that “ecstatic research” allows us to access knowledge beyond the boundaries of rigour and enter “uncharted territories” (Goulet and Miller 2007a:

5). They quote Fabian, talking about how early explorers “seldom ever sang, danced or played along” because “their ideas of science and their rules of hygiene made them reject singing, dancing, and playing as source of ethnographic knowledge” (Fabian 2000: 127; Goulet and Miller 2007a:9). They argue that a full understanding of the culture being studied is not possible without the researcher being involved in these ways. As an emic researcher it is impossible for me to be ‘hygienic’ and distant from psyculture – I am myself a participant and have had similar experiences to those described by my interview and questionnaire participants. Although a drawback is a certain level of bias towards the scene can therefore not be completely avoided, the advantage is that I am able to access my own embodied, lived experience and use this to understand the words of my study participants.

There is something to be said for finding a role that is somewhere in-between participant and observer, which is what I have tried to do. Goulet argues for an approach that involves researchers being more open to the other’s ways of being and knowing and accepting that relations between researcher and participant may be porous, with blurred boundaries. She calls this ‘radical participation’. This approach acknowledges that the researcher’s existing ways of being in and seeing the world cannot but be modified by their experiences in the field - something that levels the playing field in terms of the power structure between researcher and researched. She recounts how this approach allowed her to access new and “unexpected perceptions” (Goulet 2007: 234).

Rose describes her research with Australian Aborigines and how a close association with one of her subjects caused her to evaluate and re-evaluate her own identity and beliefs in an iterative process which blurred the boundary between researcher and subject. She favours Bateson’s term “recursive epistemology” in describing this process, citing Harries-Jones’s definition of recursion as “iterations and entanglements” which occur in the “ecological systems” of which human societies are a part (Harries-Jones 1995: 183, Rose 2007: 91). These entanglements become reflective of our own selves as ethnographers. Recursive epistemology describes the “ways of knowing and kinds of knowledge” which arise when self and other, subject and researcher, are embedded to the same degree within a situated cultural enclave, and connect and collaborate on that basis (Rose 2007: 91). She cites Emmanuel Levinas, asserting that the self is not solid and static but a set of process, of becoming and inter-relations (Levinas 1993: 20). She therefore advocates for a method of research where there is intersubjective dialogue (subject-subject rather than subject-object) where researcher and participant/subject are both in a process of becoming. This approach takes into account the situatedness of the dialogue as well as the historical narratives that researcher and participant bring into it with them and it breaks down damaging subject and

object paradigms (Rose 2007: 99). It calls for a commitment to openness and puts the researcher into a vulnerable and destabilized position where they are unable to go into the research with much of a plan and need to resist coming to satisfying conclusions (ibid 2007: 100).

I also write through the lens of the body so it is part of my approach and I will therefore go into more detail with the work that has influenced this. Suzanne Cusick writes in an article on feminism, music theory and the mind/body problem about the “profoundly unmusical quality to some music criticism”. Like Cusick, the locus of my musicality is performance. My musical identity as a singer means that music flows out from and resonates within my body: it is intimately connected with my embodiment. Cusick points out that many theory based approaches to musicology fall prey to mind/body dualism - they can turn into intellectual exercises that do not reflect the profoundly embodied nature of musical experience and expression. She contemplates this problem in her own work, suggesting that this habitus, or way of thinking may have arisen as a result of thinking about music as the text (Cusick 1994: 9-10).

I can relate to the above in terms of my own research journey. When I began to write this thesis, it was from the perspective of my classical music background. As an instrumentalist and singer I would analyse a musical text and try to reproduce an authentic and correct rendition of the piece, memorising the words and melody and studying the historical context in order to use the period appropriate ornamentation. The practice and performance of the piece was still bound up with my embodiment, breath, affect, emotion and creativity but the analysis involved in learning the piece sometimes made it an intellectual exercise, somewhat divorced from the embodied experience music making. I started of writing my thesis from this perspective, aiming to focus on analysis of a body of music and be rigorous in the application of my methods to its study - in particular, with musical semiosis. As I went forward with this approach I realised that it wasn't expressing the core experience of psytrance, especially as it is a musical genre that has been composed and developed using tape decks, computers, mixing with records, CDJs or media files and has therefore moved away from the classical written text almost completely. The musician identity at my core was also not being allowed to come into my thesis writing, and this jarred with my status as an emic researcher of psytrance. So I began trying different methods and researching theory on musical embodiment and an iterative methodology emerged, one which followed a hermeneutic circle of enquiry (Heidegger 1971, Gadamer and Fantel 1975), reflexively critiquing the research so far and making adjustments as I went to get closer to capturing the experience of my study participants - and my own.

In the conclusion to her article Cusick urges musicologists and theorists to develop new critical and methodological perspectives grounded in the experience of performing and listening bodies (Cusick 1994: 22). In the years since her article was published many such approaches have emerged, but to date, there appears to be little work approaching psytrance from an embodied perspective, so my work here can be considered a response to Cusick's call for further work in this area. As Rosemarie Anderson states "Embodied writing is an act of embodiment... [and] attempts to 'presence' the embodied experience of the writer in the text for the reader...embodied writing tries to give the body voice" (Anderson 2002: 40-41).

In my participant observation and general non-academic immersion in the psytrance scene I have, like the authors above, noted that trance is described differently and means different things to different people; for instance, people favour certain styles of psytrance for inducing the trance state and find others not as effective. It stands to reason that, just like other aspect of the scene, trance differs from location to location and from individual to individual, contingent on things like their embodiment, memories and cultural background and is therefore one of the aspects that can be explored when considering how local scenes come to have their own style. Participants in my study used several different words to describe what I think is a similar altered state of consciousness. I researched the background and meanings of these words and began to wonder whether different trance states might be facilitated by different styles of music and whether different psychoactive substances complement a particular style of trance. I questioned whether these factors, among others, might be connected to local psytrance style. In this chapter I suggest that the three descriptive words from my data correlate with different types and intensities of trance, with the word 'trance' being more strongly associated with spirituality, groove with the body and 'flow' or 'the zone' being more associated with a psychological state.

I noticed that participants in my research study often expressed a sort of mind/body dualism: people associated some elements in psytrance music with the mind and some with the body and this was often accompanied by an opinion about the relative psychedelicalness of these mind or body associated elements⁴. Typically the pulse was associated with the feet and the bass with the body, whilst the upper harmonies and leads were associated with the hands and the head, in terms of gesture, for example, when dancing. The extent to which mind or body associated elements were perceived as psychedelic seemed connected to the style of

⁴ See Chapter 2 for an explanation of this concept citing Guerra Lisi, S. and G. Stefani (2008). *A bodily semiotics of music in the globality of languages*. Music, Senses, Body, Rome: International Semiotics Institute.

psytrance favoured, the sort of psychoactive substances taken, clothing aesthetic and to whether the person had a spiritual outlook. There was also a difference in how participants spoke about trance dancing: some people explicitly referred to 'trancing' or 'trance dancing' whereas others described their dance-floor experience using words like 'groove' (for example, 'getting into/finding the groove of the music'), 'flow state' or 'the zone'. Flow is a term from the field of positive psychology, which describes a state of being where one is performing an activity and enters in to a kind of mild trance state. The key to achieving this state of mind is maintaining a balance between the difficulty level of the action and the skill (Csikszentmihalyi 1988): too easy and the mind will wander but too difficult and the mind becomes frustrated. The key is to have just enough ease to 'get into the flow' whilst maintaining some interest via having just enough of a sense of challenge or difficulty. Trance however, while similar in meaning, has a host of additional connotations stemming from the word's spiritual and ritual origins.

So what do we mean when we talk about 'trance' as opposed to 'flow' or 'groove' in the context of music and dancing? What is the significance of this mind/body distinction that is being made by participants in my study and what do the words they use reveal about their embodied experience of psytrance? Could different styles of psytrance induce different altered states and if so, what kind of trance state might accompany 'the London sound' as opposed to styles popular in Bristol, for example? The next sections attempt to explain how the characteristics of trance, flow and groove are reflected in the music, how they are created by music producers and how they are experienced by bodies on the dance-floor. The chapter is guided by the words of my study participants and observations from analysis of psytrance tracks that I undertook as part of my research and concludes with some remarks on what I think the presence of trance characteristics in local psytrance styles tell us about differences between local scenes.

In this thesis I acknowledge that psychedelic experience can happen as a result of non-drug induced altered states of consciousness and comparisons can be made with meditation, deep listening and trancing. This can be problematic not least because of the issues psytrance has with orientalism and the lack of diversity in the scene, which scholars like Saldanha have highlighted (2005). I feel the experiential approach to the study of psytrance allows for some comparison to be drawn between it and non-Western music, even though this could be considered as colonising the non-Western music cultures I am referring to. The perspective I offer here is bound up in my embodiment and experience, so my work is necessarily entangled with my identity. However, even though I am addressing methodological approach to psytrance and I am reflexive in my research, I think it is beyond

the scope of this thesis to properly address issues like race, sexuality and disability in psytrance - I believe it is best for marginalised voices to be heard on many of those topics in any case. The majority of scholarship on psytrance is by male authors and the majority of psytrance producers and DJs are also male, which makes gender inequality in psytrance an area of research ripe for inquiry, but gender studies is not my area of expertise. I have therefore chosen to limit my discussion to aspects of the embodied psytrance experience which are fairly universal, such as listening and moving to music on the dance-floor, though of course these experiences still vary widely between different bodies and in different contexts.

The broad ontology of this thesis is based in embodied realism, a philosophical concept set out in the seminal work of George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, *Philosophy in the Flesh* (1999). Their work draws on the embodied phenomenology of scholars like John Dewey (1922/2002), who showed that bodily, intellectual, social and emotional experiences are not separate but integrated, and Merleau-Ponty (1945/1962, 1968). Merleau-Ponty argued against the independence of subject and object, saying that they are features that arise from this field of integrated experience which then have the concepts subject and object applied to them. I combine this philosophical approach with concepts from the work of Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, particularly *A Thousand Plateaus* (1987), such as the *rhizome*, *body without organs* (BwO), *plane of immanence* and the notion of *becoming*, and bring them further into focus through the work of authors who have extrapolated these philosophies into the domain of music, such as Edward Campbell's *Music After Deleuze* (2013).

In their work *Philosophy in the Flesh*, Lakoff and Johnson set out their challenge to Western analytic and post-modern philosophy, which they call *embodied realism* (1999: 14). This is derived from the ideas of Merleau-Ponty and Dewey who argued that the mind and body are not separate, that experience is embodied and not ethereal and that philosophy must be informed by science. As Jeff Harrison writes, Merleau-Ponty's perspective on the mind/body problem can be usefully summarised as: we do not *have* bodies; we *are* bodies (2014: 28). Embodied realism asserts that there is only one objective reality but sees the world as mediated by the sensorimotor physicality and cognitive processes of the body: Lakoff and Johnson urge us to take into account this mediation to come to a real, stable understanding of the world (1999: 93-94). Embodied realism also accepts that concepts vary over time and from culture to culture, that they are multiple and fluid and may be socially constructed: conceptualizing human nature itself as variable and evolving allows for this lability of meaning.

From the perspective of embodied realism, knowledge about the world is gathered and interpreted via three basic mechanisms. Firstly, there are concepts which are directly embodied, such as basic sensorimotor perceptions and interactions, spatial relations and event-structure concepts. These are hypothesised as evolutionary in origin and as providing the basis through which we can come to a stable, scientific understanding of reality. Secondly, primary metaphors, which are constrained by the architecture and functioning of our bodies, make possible the extension of basic embodied concepts into an abstract theoretical domain. Thirdly, complex metaphors arise from the interplay of the primary metaphors (Lakoff and Johnson 1999: 49-54).

As Nick Crossley (2015: 1) highlights, there is little sociological work on the link between music and embodiment. Christopher Driver and Andy Bennett concur with this view in their article 'Music Scenes, Space and the Body' (2015) where they critique CCCS subculture theory for its lack of embodied perspective and offer an alternate term to subculture: the *music world*. Adapted from Becker's concept of *art worlds* (1982), music worlds include not only musicians, but 'supporting personnel': in the case of psytrance, this could be booking agents, record label employees, décor artists or stage crew - and people may take on several roles, like interviewee Robin Triskele. Crossley (2015) relates this to musicologist Christopher Small's idea of *musicking*, which turns the totemic concept of 'music' as an object, into a verb - and further, a collective action (2011). These concepts, in part, led to my inclusion of a wider range of scene participants in my interviews, beyond my initial plans to interview music producers.

However, Crossley (ibid 2015) points out that scholars associated with the CCCS did in fact touch upon embodiment in their work, though implicitly, and had some interesting things to say about it. Using this as a starting point Crossley considers support personnel as well as artists in music worlds, studying the embodiment of their roles and the *body techniques* those roles engender. Body techniques, a concept of Marcel Mauss (1979), are learned uses of the body which vary from society to society, between different sub groups within societies and across time periods. Crossley considers how body techniques are interwoven with some key elements of music worlds, which he borrows from Becker (1982), namely: conventions, resources, social networks and places. They are not just patterns of body movement but a kind of embodied reason which generates meaning and represents enculturated knowledge and understanding. Chapters 2 and 3 of this thesis could be said to explore the body techniques of the psytrance dancefloor, and how they generate and transmit meaning.

Having introduced embodied realism, I want to explain how I relate that approach to the study of sound, music and cultures focussed around music, like psytrance. First, I bridge a

connection from embodiment to sound and music through the philosophy of Deleuze and Deleuze and Guattari. Then I explain how I relate embodiment to music cultures, using Peter Sloterdijk's concept of *spheropoiesis* to describe how people recreate their inner experience in the construction of musical spaces and places. Finally I discuss the ideas of *milieu* and *circulatory flow*, which I use to conceptualise how musical spaces and places connect and share cultural information, for example elements of musical style.

1.6a. Sound and Embodiment

As stated above, the philosophy of Deleuze and Deleuze and Guattari allows me to make a connection between embodied realism and music. However, it also underpins the way I mentally envisage sound and music, playing a central role in how I describe musical space and time in psytrance in chapter 2. Therefore, I think it is necessary to provide the reader with some in-depth background to the concepts I draw from their work and explain why they are so useful when writing about music like psytrance.

Elizabeth Grosz (2008: 63) explains that in Deleuze's thinking, art does not come from higher, transcendent intelligence but stems from our humble animal origins⁵. She describes two traditional schools of thought about the evolution of language. Firstly, that language preceded music and music is therefore a leftover product of language development and thus a result of natural selection (survival instincts). Secondly, the school of thought espoused by Darwin and others, that music precedes language and is therefore related to sexual selection: that sounds, resonance, vibration are inherently sensual and for pleasure as well as propagating the species (ibid 2008: 31-33). Whichever theory is accurate (and it may be impossible to know)⁶ Deleuzian thought has it that the impetus for the evolution of music was the excess of vitality left over from that needed for basic survival and that because of this, music is wild, unpredictable and capricious in character (ibid 2008: 63).

As Cox explains (2006), Deleuze's philosophy attempts to construct a post-theological, naturalist ontology that reconceptualises beings as *becomings*. Organisms and organizations are only temporary assemblages because although they may appear discrete

⁵ Deleuze himself did not write a great deal about music specifically, but other scholars have extrapolated his thoughts from the domain of visual art into the musical domain.

⁶ The field which investigates the evolution of human psychology, both in individuals and also in terms of group dynamics (such as the coalition theory I introduce in chapter 3) is called Evolutionary Psychology. The field is criticized by the scientific community as unscientific, because the hypotheses it makes about human evolution are thus far empirically untestable. I use these ideas in my thesis accepting that as it stands, these ideas are mere possible explanations for aspects of human development and the development of human culture.

and defined, they are in a continual state of flux. It is as if their atoms and molecules are slowed down and contained, making them seem solid or static to the observer. Hierarchical organizations are conceptualised in terms of horizontal surfaces, called *planes of consistency* or *planes of immanence*, populated by “singularities, affects, intensities, speeds, and haecceities” which emerge and flow dynamically (Cox 2006: 163). In Deleuzian terms, music is a dance between chaotic and territorialising forces, where music is the invention of lines of flight to escape the refrain. Experiencing music is therefore a means for us to be transformed in a continual becoming and to explore new possibilities (Grosz 2008: 56).

Deleuze began his career writing about the concepts of difference and repetition (1994). Plato’s concept of original forms and simulacra placed importance on likeness: the greater degree of identity the simulacrum has with the original, the more authenticity it has. Deleuze wanted to overturn this with a philosophy of difference - though this term departs from the traditional sense of the word and has a very specific definition within his philosophy (as the reader will also see with the terms *virtual* and *milieu* below, which I use with completely different definitions, contexts and purposes throughout the rest of this thesis). As Campbell explains, to Deleuze all forms are simulacra; there is no original form in the Platonic sense. When one looks at forms from a Deleuzian perspective, the result is a range of likenesses and resemblances which can be classified into differences and partial identities, resulting in a system of thought where difference is placed above sameness in importance (Deleuze 1994: 66, Campbell 2013: 8-9). Similarly, repetition is traditionally thought of as producing similar, equal or identical copies of material, where Deleuzian repetition involves the repetition of material but it is never repeated exactly the same (Deleuze 1994: 13, 40-1, 115, 26, 2013: 9): this is a development of Nietzsche’s concept of eternal return or recurrence (1883/1978: 246-48). This seems to apply very much to sampling and remixing in electronic music like psytrance.

In his later work with Felix Guattari, Deleuze would expound upon three main models to explain his new image of thought and naturalistic ontology: the rhizome, the body without organs (BwO) and the plane of immanence or plane of consistency. These are similar concepts but some are more usefully applied to particular examples than others. For example, I find it more useful to use the idea of the rhizome when talking about structures and organisations than organisms. The western tonal system can be thought of as embodying an arborescent or stratified image of thought (Campbell 2013: 37). The alternative rhizomatic image of thought only arises through generalised chromaticism where all sound components and parameters are in continuous variation. Deleuze and Guattari are quite strict in their definition, so perhaps psytrance for them, would not qualify as rhizomatic.

It is a superlinear system where constant lines of flights and connections emerge (Campbell 2013: 38).

Deleuze writes of composers and musicians contemporary to his time, that they exploit the idea of a plane of immanence. This concept when applied to music describes a musical form where “particles or molecules of sound” arise and interact, with the musical variation coming from varying speeds, textures, intensities and relationships and in this way the organization of the piece is at the forefront of our experience rather than a hidden structure beneath harmonic and melodic complexity as with, for example, the refrain-led music of the classical period. Here, themes, motives and subjects are still evident, but only as “free floating affects” (Deleuze and Parnet 1987: 94, cited in Cimini 2010: 129-30). Deleuze and Guattari assert that “it is undoubtedly John Cage who first and most perfectly deployed this fixed sound plane, which affirms process against all structure and genesis” (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 159). As Campbell describes, particles of thought coalesce on a plane or organisation, but as soon as they are restricted by being organized into an assemblage (territorialised), they evade the organisation by creating lines of flight (deterritorialisation) to a plane of immanence where they can reterritorialise and form new connections and assemblages. Thus, any assemblages are transient and there is continual passage of particles and assemblages between planes (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 270, cited in Campbell 2013: 39-40).

As Cox explains, BwO is the virtual field of the body, the domain of particles and forces (including affects and perceptions) and their potentials. When a body is organised it is constrained and reduced in potential (stratified): it becomes territorialized and static. The BwO is a self-dismantling machine which is constantly deterritorialising, deconstructing itself into particulate essences, allowing for pure densities and intensities to arise unconstrained and new connections and assemblages to form (Deleuze and Guattari 1977: 4, 8, Cox 2006). So how does this concept map on to music? Deleuze and Guattari say that if music can be a body or an organism, it can become a BwO (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 267, Cox 2006). Campbell cites Grosz when he says that the BwO describes perpetually fluid motion of the process of territorialisation, deterritorialisation and reterritorialisation (Grosz 1994: 203, Campbell 2013: 40). This system of thought rejects literary, linguistic and semiotic models of analysis and so Grosz asserts that we must ask of music not what it means or how to decipher it but what does it do and how does it connect with other things such as the listener, the composer, or the musical and extramusical context (Grosz 1994: 199, Campbell 2013: 41). The process of deterritorialisation and reterritorialisation is linked to transversal or diagonal lines of flight as in Boulez’s writings. In Deleuze and Guattari’s own words:

'Becoming music' furthers an action-oriented listening in which sounds cross a threshold to a dynamic aesthetics of doing, proceeding by speeds and affects rather than representation, shifting from "the songbird" to the "sound molecule" ... becoming and multiplicity are the same thing. ... [A] multiplicity is continually transforming itself into a string of other multiplicities, according to its thresholds and doors. ... In fact, the self is only a threshold, a door, a becoming between two multiplicities (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 248-9).

Aspects of psytrance could be considered stratified: the structure of tracks can be formulaic, for instance and the tools of composition, such as DAWs, are constrained by horizontal lines across a computer screen. However, as a BWO, a field of potentiality surrounds psytrance music, in that it has the possibility of escape into 'diagonal' planes of textural experimentation. In chapter 2 I talk about the virtual body, and this can also be conceived as a BWO. The sensory overload of the dancefloor and overwhelming speed of the beat push the body of the dancer into overdrive: in the imagined space of the music, the virtual body includes a field of potential which allows the dancer to feel enhanced beyond their usual capabilities. Edgard Varèse imagined such music, consisting of zones of intensities, colours, timbres and loudnesses, before the technology existed that would allow this to be properly realised (1998: 197, cited in Cox 2006: 17-18). He envisioned that variation in these factors would come about as a result of processes being applied and that the role of these characteristics would become foregrounded in the music rather than incidental, as was generally true of music in his day, and would appear like areas of colour on a map showing elevation and other elements of geography (ibid 2006: 18). Steve Reich (1974) wrote that in his music, process is foregrounded rather than hidden beneath the music 'proper' and described how when he focusses on the gradual change and unfolding of process it can feel like a kind of ritual journey which turns one's thinking away from subjectivity and from the narrative form to abstraction (Cox 2006: 8). The music goes beyond human characteristics to become an assemblage of machinic desire - a BwO (ibid 2006: 7). This idea of a molecular 'process music' seems to presage much electronic music, psytrance particularly (ibid 2006: 5).

The refrain acts in the opposite way to the BwO: whereas the plane of immanence is a constantly changing, deterritorialising sound, the refrain is the ditty, the repetitive melody, or ritornello whose vehicle is the human voice. The refrain attempts to impose the organizing power of the universe on a chaotic structure, to create boundaries and barriers. As Deleuze and Guattari assert, the refrain is territorializing, stratifying and restricting (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 300-02, Cox 2006: 12). EDM and minimalist music deterritorialises the refrain in various ways, such as by foregrounding other aspects of the music like timbre and rhythm. The importance of the voice, as the vehicle of the refrain, is also reduced in EDM through

the foregrounding of computer generated noise, sampling, which cuts it into desubjectified snippets and digital processing, making it less recognisable as human. The digitally processed human voice comes to represent a machinically enhanced body, surrounded by a field of new potential capabilities.

In Grosz' reading of Deleuze, music is constantly trying to evade the refrain, by recontextualising it within tunes, songs, duets, sonatas and so on. Coming back to Deleuze and Guattari's metaphor of birdsong, as Campbell explains, the refrain is a territorial assemblage in the same way as birdsong is the way for birds to mark out their territory (Campbell 2013: 46). In music, refrains are the sound components in the assemblage. Milieus are the different areas which the sound components draw from - in Deleuze and Guattari's example of a bird mating dance, there is a sound from the beak, a ruffle of feathers or a posture, each element stemming from different sensory milieu (Campbell 2013: 46).

Cox writes that EDM and minimalism are in non-pulsed time which means they are not narrative, have no dramatic structure and do not work towards a goal. The repetitive beat allows the listener to experience time differently - expanding and contracting, it seems at once drawn out but also but also driven forward, carrying one along in a wave of becoming. Robert Fink's concept of 'the music of the drive' is similar to this, where, referring to repetitive, minimalist music he characterises it as being non-goal oriented and without closure, in opposition to 'music of desire' which builds in intensity towards a final cadence (Fink, 2005:38). In the words of Deleuze "a musical form will depend on a complex relation between speeds and slownesses of sound particles" (1988: 123). And in the words of Deleuze and Guattari:

...the work of art must mark seconds, tenths and hundredths of seconds. Or rather it is a question of a freeing of time, Aeon, a nonpulsed time for a floating music, as Boulez says, an electronic music in which forms are replaced by pure modifications of speed...a floating time against pulsed time or tempo, experimentation against any kind of interpretation, and in which silence as sonorous rest also marks the absolute state of movement (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 43, 159, Cox 2006).

Brian Hulse writes of Deleuze's conception of becoming in relation to time that the present itself is "inseparable from a presence of a past and a presence of a future incorporated within it" (2010: 37). This, as Campbell notes, is the concept of Aeon in Deleuze's work, where time is unfolded into elongated pasts and futures and each present is divided ad infinitum into past and future (Deleuze 1990: 61-62, Campbell 2013: 103). Campbell describes how in Deleuze's way of thinking both past and future events are coexisting "dimensions of a present becoming". On the other hand, we have Chronos, a coiling up of

interlocking, relative present moments - 'God's view' of time (Campbell, 2013: 104, Deleuze, 1990: 162).

Campbell explains that Deleuze and Guattari drew their concept of smooth and striated space from composer Pierre Boulez, though the idea did not originate with him and was explored by other composers like Edgard Varèse and Harry Partch through their experiments with micro-tones (2013: 71-74). The idea of smooth and striated space when applied to music conceptualises it as sound, in a physical sciences sense. An example of striated pitch space would be the diatonic scale, which is divided into 12 semi-tone steps. Curved pitch space on the other hand is demonstrated in the ability to measure pitch very precisely in cents or hundredths of a semitone, which is made simple through the use of digital music production software, though a single increment is undetectable to the human ear. Different scales and tonal systems carve different paths through pitch space and pitch spaces can also be derived from parts of other pitch spaces (Campbell 2013: 71). Deleuze and Guattari also apply the concept of smooth and striated space to other musical parameters besides pitch. For example, they describe how the crafting of texture can be used as a basis for change in other parameters and how repetition can be used in such a way that one parameter can be changed slightly on each iteration, so that a spiralling effect emerges. This is a kind of auditory illusion analogous to op art (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 478, Campbell 2013: 74).

Campbell extends Deleuze and Guattari's work into the arena of international music giving Southern Indian classical music as an example. He explains the concepts of Svara and Śruti in ancient Indian music theory. Śruti is the potential division of a pitch on a tonal, vertical continuum, an unheard substrate of micro-units of sound (for example, an octave may have been split into 22 micro-units. Svara is an abstract pitch class, or melodic element in context, a region of the pitch continuum that finds expression or manifestation - it is the heard part of the Śruti and manifests from it. In this musical system, pitches are seen not as points, but as areas to be explored and there is a lot of room given to musicians to work within these approximate pitches (Powers and Widdess 2001, Campbell 2013: 91-92). Deleuze's concept of the virtual is like the non-expressed part of the Śruti - it is the molecular, genetic or embryonic material that holds within it the all possible permutations. It is real and tangible but exists as a field of possibilities until realised as the Svara (Deleuze 1994: 209, Campbell 2013: 91-92). In this way, the system is both atomistic in conception but also continuous in nature - a very good approximation of the Deleuzian ideal of music.

Psytrance is similar to this with its drone-like bass and kick drum, approximate pitches and, given that it is electronic computer music, the potentially infinite pitch divisions that make it a

smooth pitch space. Psytrance tends to foreground timbre and rhythm over pitch and many of the sounds are too noisy to be identifiable as an exact pitch – exact pitch is transitory as the envelopes applied to sound mutate it. Psytrance producers tend to work with software like Ableton and Logic, where each channel is assigned an instrument, or group of instruments and sounds, so that different pitched voices are arranged in order on different strata on the screen. There is also received wisdom about how to fill the auditory spectrum in order to create a soundscape that is full and immersive, so that pitch in this sense is important – if not in the same way as for example, traditional classical music where it is a key element of melody and harmony. Pitch in psytrance is mainly used in the service of creating space and shape. ‘Acid lines’ or the main theme in tracks which although not necessarily a bona fide melody in the traditional sense, provide a ‘refrain’ of sorts, in contrast to the use of pitch to create space and shapes.

Deleuze uses Nietzsche’s forces to differentiate between arborescent and rhizomatic music: music becomes a dialogue or dance between Apollonian state philosophies, like Western tonality or the refrain, and Dionysian forces and nomad thought, for instance microtonal tuning systems or curved pitch space (Campbell 2013: 97). Considering all the above, psytrance tracks can be conceptualised as BwOs. Being open-ended assemblages, they can also be particles that interact in larger BwOs such as sets, mixes, remixes, bodies of work by a particular artist and whole genres. As Cox (2006) notes of EDM in general, glitch, stutter and gating effects detract from the forward movement, momentarily bringing one’s attention back to texture and sound, and preventing anything from becoming too signified (ibid 2006: 16). EDM tracks, as Cox has it, are not about tension and release but about pure sound events and processes (ibid 2006: 16-17). This is not strictly true of psytrance, which consists of a succession of musical sections building to climaxes. Its drone, pulse, use of repetition and immersive soundscapes do however create a plane of consistency from which “sonorous molecules” arise and mingle. These sonorous molecules are known as haecceities, or ‘thingnesses’ (ibid 2006: 16-17), a common and important element in psytrance tracks, as I will expand upon in chapter 2.

Chapter 2: Body

Sound Objects, Musical Space and the Virtual Body

2.0 Introduction

Psytrance as a culture and musical style is bound up in the sensual experience of dancing, listening, trancing and psychoactive adventuring, making it a subject ripe for inquiry through interpretative phenomenology. This approach is also an ideal hermeneutic window through which to examine qualitative data collected in an idiographic research project like this one, because it focusses on how local psytrance scenes are experienced by scene participants. The starting point in phenomenology is perception, so it is as if the Cartesian “I think therefore I am” becomes “I experience therefore I am”. In other words, in phenomenology it is the whole organism that we consider when investigating human experience, not just the brain and, by extension, the mind. An organism is a collection of processes perceived as a totality and interacts with the world, perpetually updating and adapting itself in response to its environment. Similarly, as my research project unfolded, I re-evaluated and adapted my methods of enquiry according to what I had learned. This kind of circularity occurs in phenomenological inquiry because it regards phenomena as dynamic and emergent - even solid-state objects that appear static are viewed as being caught up in processes of perception and action. Phenomenological experience is in relation to other things, the body or the world for instance, and is inter-subjective in that it describes how human beings are able to communicate, ascribe meaning to and empathize with each-other's experience.

Maurice Merleau-Ponty was an important proponent of the phenomenology of consciousness and the body, whose ideas have endured and are often cited in current scientific research into human perception, psychology and consciousness. I am using the ideas of Merleau-Ponty at the macro and micro levels of my research. At the macro level I have used his ideas to shape my methodology and one of the ways I have done this is in bridging the gap between embodiment and language in my research: I have been able to reconcile my analysis of the words of participants about their experience with the actual embodied experience of psytrance. This is because Merleau-Ponty views language as being contingent on the body schema and therefore able to be studied from an embodied perspective rather than a logocentric one (Lewis & Staehler, 2010).

I have chosen modes of analysis which describe the phenomenological experience of music as from an embodied perspective, “music *is* our phenomenological experience of music” (Anderson 2008: 296). Although it is the words of my interlocutors which guide my analysis of psytrance, these are descriptors of their embodied experiences. For instance, the music production hardware and software used by psytrance producers can be viewed like any other physical tool: as an extension of their body. Music producers also listen to their own and other people’s music and are usually part of a psytrance scene where they attend parties. All of these are embodied experiences and so can be subjected to phenomenological enquiry based on the work of scholars like Merleau-Ponty. In this chapter Merleau-Ponty’s ideas are brought together with those of Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari to set out the conceptual framework within which I make my argument in this thesis: I describe how I conceptualise the body, the imagined space of music, the sound objects within it, the body’s interaction with these and how our bodies cross over into musical imaginary space. I also discuss briefly Merleau-Ponty’s theory of style in relation to art and how it can be applied to psytrance styles.

As I related in chapter 1, the broad ontology of this thesis is based in embodied realism, a philosophical concept set out in the Lakoff and Johnson’s *Philosophy in the Flesh* (1999) which attempts to integrate scientific realism and embodied phenomenology. Their work identifies a problematic disconnect between scientific realism and embodiment where the observer is thought of as separate from the observed: in not acknowledging the embodied nature of the mind, cognitive science was missing a key part of the picture in its study of cognitive processes (1999: 92-93). In this next introductory section I therefore set out some of the philosophical ideas and empirical science underpinning sections 2.1-2.4.

2.0a. Merleau-Ponty, Deleuze & Guattari and the Imagined Space of Music

The *lived body* is an important concept in Merleau-Ponty’s seminal work *Phenomenology of Perception*; this is a person’s physical body, how they experience it and how they experience the world through it (ibid 1945/1962: 304). The lived body is part of the world, which consists of what we perceive, our *context of references*, because our interaction with the world and our very existence in it are contingent on our embodied state. We organise our bodies via *kinaesthesia*: sensory feedback from muscles, tendons and joints which inform us about the movements of our body or limbs and its position in space. This collection of processes is called the body schema. Drawing on Merleau-Ponty’s ideas about the body’s role in perception and cognition, Shaun Gallagher uses the concept of body schema but separates this from another concept, *body image* (Gallagher 2005: 15-39). Body image is the system of

perceptions, attitudes, beliefs and mental representations we associate with our body and of which we have conscious awareness, whereas the body schema relates to the sensory-motor system that functions independently without our awareness or monitoring. Body image is related to our ability to perceive or have a belief about something, including our own body. Body schema is associated with our ability to maintain posture, move or do something to an object of perception. Related to these concepts are two different aspects of movement; *morphokinetic*, to do with shape and form but not spatial location and *topokinetic* which is to do with movement within space and targeted movement towards objects of perception (Gallagher 2005: 107-30).

In *Philosophy of Perception* Merleau-Ponty describes our bodies as opening us up to the world (1945/1962: 165) via different sensory channels and interacting with objects in it. Our body sees, to give one sensory channel as an example, and apprehends in its mind their attributes, or *qualia*, assigning them as a particular colour, texture or kind of object. These attributes are as we perceive them because of the form and capabilities of our bodies, our past experiences and our memories. As Merleau-Ponty describes in *The Visible and the Invisible*, apprehension is a cyclical process where the object and the subject are intertwined, which he calls *chiasm* (from the Greek word meaning 'crossing over'). In this view of the world, objects, our bodies and our sense of self are not fixed, solid-state things but are being constantly updated through interaction with each-other. (Merleau-Ponty 1968: 130-55, Lewis and Staehler 2010).

Gilles Deleuze first discussed his concept of the *Body Without Organs* (BwO) in his 1969 work *The Logic of Sense* (1990) and it later became a central theme in his collaborative works with Felix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (1977: 8-10) and *A Thousand Plateaus* (1987). The BwO is a means of conceptualising bodies, which are organised systems at any scale, whether it is for example an organism, human social system or political ideology. It goes beyond the completed, organised structure to look at processes: in other words, it aims to look not only at the organisation of a body but how it becomes organised (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 149-65, Deleuze 1990: 188-90). If we apply this to human bodies, this idea has some similarities with Merleau-Ponty's lived body concept. Viewing the human body as a BwO, we switch from seeing a concrete and passive thing to defining it by what it does: its interactions, processes and the forces and desires that compete over its territory. Merleau-Ponty's cyclical process of apprehension could also be described as a Deleuzian assemblage, a kind of abstract 'apprehension machine' where the perceiver and the perceived object are in an ongoing state of mutual becoming. As I will describe in the main sections of the chapter, music creates an imaginary space in which we

interact with its sound objects, which are sounds that we perceive as units and whose characteristics we experience in other sensory domains by mentally converting auditory input on an isometric scale. As Lewis and Staehler contend, depth is the most existential dimension to Merleau-Ponty because it facilitates our body's proprioception, by describing our distance from objects (Lewis and Staehler 2010). Merleau-Ponty and Deleuze's ideas therefore work synergistically when applied to the musical experience.

Psytrance and indeed many other forms of electronic dance music, can be described as a BwO: a system of processes, "forces, densities and intensities" (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 164-343) that compete for territory, de-territorialising and re-territorialising in a state of flux (ibid 1987: 8-9). It is music that leans away from subjectivity, allowing qualities like repetition, texture and depth to have primacy over lyrics and melodies. This gives it something in common with gesture-based expression as described above, which Gallagher explains is the impulse that stimulates vocal communication (2005: 126). As Merleau-Ponty observed: "the body converts a certain motor essence into vocal form" (1945/1962: 181). For these reasons psytrance is suited to an embodied analysis that takes in its Deleuzian characteristics: gesture, texture and particles of sound (Campbell 2013: 92-93).

The BwO is analogous with the *plane of consistency* or *plane of immanence* in Deleuze and Guattari's writings, where systems of forces and processes are described as *molecular* (1987: 265-72)⁷ – a collection of single events and potential events that interact to become a temporary organism. This is apt for psytrance, which has sonic spatial structures in which clouds of particle-like sounds coalesce fleetingly, forming 'molecules': evanescent shapes and gestures. Ableton Live and other music production software exemplify the turbulence of an assemblage of multiple, competing forces, in that they contain a tension between organised space and process and a multiplicity of available sounds and possibilities. Similarly on a macro level, each regional psytrance scene is its own abstract assemblage or creating machine. I visualise it as a metaphorical supercollider, smashing together particulate ideas at speed and ceaselessly propelling the by-products out into the world as difference.

In psytrance music, the plane of immanence is exemplified by the sonic stage of possibility. The boundaries of this stage are set by various factors such as the capabilities of the producer's software and hardware tools or the ever present pulse and bassline that provide a hypnotic backdrop from which tantalising, novel sounds or *haecceities* spring. Deleuze and Guattari, influenced by Boulez, described *striated* space, which communicates Apollonian

⁷ Also see Campbell (2013): 160-161 for examples in relation to music.

thinking through continuity, order, structure - in music, *pulsed time* - and in contrast to this, smooth space, which engenders non-linear *nomad thought* - in music, discontinuous, unstructured or non-pulsed time (1987: 265-72).

Ableton Live, a music production software or Digital Audio Workstation (DAW) popular with psytrance producers and which I used to conduct practice-led research for this thesis, has two main ways of working which provide a useful example of the pulsed time versus non-pulsed time concept. The sequencer screen, called the 'arrangement view', is a common feature of many DAWs and consists of horizontal lines representing musical material assigned to different tracks - containers for musical instruments, sounds and samples - which are arranged on a vertical axis on the left side of the screen. Along the bottom of the screen time stamps are arranged horizontally and when playing back the project you are working on, the screen scrolls from left to right in a linear sequence as time progresses: this represents the organised, striated space and pulsed-time. 'Session view' on the other hand offers a useful metaphor for the non-pulsed time concept. It abandons horizontal lines and marking time in a linear fashion, by allowing the producer to 'audition' different sounds, samples and instruments together and get an immediate feel for timbre and what textures different combinations of sounds will produce. When auditioning sounds in this view, one has a sense of experiencing an eternal 'now' rather than a succession of moments which connect forwards and backwards in linear time. This approach is concerned with depth, a dimension that runs in a different direction to melody and harmony within musical space. In this eternal present, you get a sense of the infinite possibilities of sounds and combinations of sounds at your fingertips and thus the immanence of this timbral dimension.

This line of thinking transfers onto other parameters of music, such as pitch space. For example, the range of a flute could be considered striated due to the limitations inherent in its shape and size: it is a metal tube of fixed length with a set number of holes and keys based upon the typical dimensions of hands and number of fingers on the human body. The lip plate position on the head of the flute combined with the player's embouchure and other physical factors like the size and shape of resonating chambers behind the mask of the face will provide another set of limitations which allow for a range of timbres. A software synthesizer on the other hand, such as a Virtual Studio Technology or VST plug-in for a DAW, is not limited by having a physical form, and having this wide range of frequencies and timbres could represent the idea of smooth pitch space⁸. Psytrance, then, being a music that

⁸ In terms of pitch space, it is not in reality completely smooth, because the frequencies are rounded to the nearest 'cent' or hundredth of a semi-tone, but seeing as this division is so small to be undetectable to human hearing, the pitch space functions as if smooth.

for the most part is produced virtually through the use of DAWs and VST plug-ins, can be considered as having a smooth pitch space in comparison to musics created by people playing instruments with a physical form. Deleuze and Guattari also referred to this concept as a *diagonal* (1987: 296-97), a term borrowed from the composer Pierre Boulez, describing music which does not rely primarily on melody and harmony, or other horizontal and vertical axes of development: again, this is an apt description of electronic music like psytrance (Cox 2006).

2.0b. The Body, Gesture, Language and Style

Turning now to the body, I explain some of the ways in which its physiology and mechanics affect cognition. In *How the Body Shapes the Mind* (2005: 17-39), Sean Gallagher outlines four overall types of body movement: reflex, for example sneezing, which is controlled by automatic motor programs; locomotive, such as walking or sitting, controlled by the body schema; instrumental, such as reaching and grasping, also controlled by the body schema, and expressive, such as pointing or gesturing, which is controlled at the level of cognitive-semantic and communication. Language depends on expressive movement, such as gesture. Gallagher cites a case study where a man with aproprioception, unable to locate and intentionally move his hands without being able to see them, had a barrier placed at neck level to obscure the view of his hands, but was still able to gesture with them when speaking (Gallagher 2005: 40-64). This shows that gestures are not controlled by the body schema but align with vocal expression and semantic-pragmatic intention (Gallagher 2005: 107-29).

The connection between body and speech is the basis for Merleau-Ponty's theory of style. An artist's style (which allows us to recognize a certain painting as the work of a particular artist) is one example of style whilst a person's *bodily comportment* - the totality of their posture, gestures and mannerisms - is another. As Michael Lewis and Tanja Staehler assert in *Phenomenology: An Introduction*: "A style remains implicit while it is enacted, and can only be recognized indirectly or at a distance" (Lewis and Staehler 2010: 179). Both Merleau-Ponty and Gallagher assert that language and gesture have their basis in movement. Expressive movement, like language, has different conventions in different countries. Language and gesture also transcend movement though, and the same is true for music. It transcends embodiment, taking us into a semantic space that is "pragmatic, intersubjective, [and] intercorporeal" (Gallagher 2005: 126). It is within this semantic space that concepts, identities and cultural conventions are thrown up in constant flux. Psytrance music and the embodied experience of listening and dancing to it exemplify this semantic space; tracks are open-ended bodies without organs where temporary associations are made, fleeting

assemblages emerge and fall away, and a kind of cross-cultural semantic web arises. I believe that one of the ways psytrance styles emerge is via the shared embodied experience of the music and the psychedelic semantic space projected out from it. I return to this point in more detail later in the thesis.

There is a significant body of work that theorises how the evolution of the human body has shaped, and been shaped by, music. Stefania Guerra Lisi and Gino Stefani (in Martinelli 2008: 535-44) for example, describe how we ascribe meaning to music as a result of embodiment through cognitive metaphor theory. To offer a brief explanation of this, simple metaphors are created from topological or geometrical structures in the music which we associate with our bodies and which then act as the basis for layers of more complex metaphors. As other scholars, such as Neil Todd (1999) and Udi Pladott (2002) have confirmed, people receive music as a somatic experience, relating the feeling of inner bodily states to states of mind and more complex layers of semiotic meaning. These metaphor structures differ from person to person and culture to culture due to differences in language, surrounding culture and personal experience which causes a wide range of different interpretations of musical gestures and relationships (in Martinelli 2008: 535-44).

In *Conceptual spaces: the Geometry of Thought*, Peter Gärdenfors states that “A metaphor expresses an identity in topological or geometrical structure between different domains” (2000: 176). Metaphors in music are rooted in the embodied experience of being inside and outside, moving from one place to another: we base our concept of left, right, behind, in front on our experience of our body in the context of the world and in relation to objects in the world. Stefani and Guerra Lisi (2008: 537-38) give the example of melody, which they theorize is rooted in the human voice. The concept of pitch on a vertical scale they say, comes from the exertion required in the body to support higher frequency vocalisations: the extension of the diaphragm is a movement in opposition to gravity. The mouth, throat and respiratory system are also situated in the upper part of the body, as are the upper limbs. The hands are the parts of the body that have the ability to perform the most complex movements and manipulate and interact with the world: they also then become associated with the melody and with the complexity of rhythm. The relative proximity of the mouth, throat and hands to the brain leads them to be associated with cognitive processes. In contrast, the lower portion of the body becomes associated with the lower end of the vertical pitch scale and with pulse and rhythm, due to the regularity of movement involved in walking or running (Guerra Lisi and Stefani 2008: 538-39). Isomorphism in music perception is what gives us a sense of space and movement. For example, sound is perceived by the auditory cortex and interpreted as an abstract form in space by the visual cortex. Gradual change in

musical parameters then gives a sense of direction and distance, gesture and locomotion (Todd 1999, Pladott 2002).

Meaning can be found in both the macro structures and micro elements of music. Julia Painter and Stefan Koelsch (2011) investigated whether sounds which were out of musical context could themselves convey meaning, utilising EEG experiments to find neural correlates of meaning in music. This involved the detection of electro-physiological responses in the brain which are sensitive to the processing of meaningful concepts. They explain two types of meaning that we derive from music. Intramusical meaning is where a tone, phrase or whole section points to another musical event or implies another musical event. This type has no intrinsic meaning of its own but to draws meaning from comparison to another musical event. Extra-musical meaning communicates meaning by referring to extramusical concepts or events (ibid 2011).

Meaning can also emerge at different stages of perceptual processing. Stefan Koelsch and W.A. Siebel (2005) outlined a model of music perception processing which describes the underlying neural processes involved. They divided these into early and late processing stages; the early stages include feature extraction, *Gestalt* formation, and the analysis of intervals. Late processing stages included structure building and the reanalysis of structure, vitalisation and action processes. They concluded from their study that meaningful representations and emotional responses can arise from early or late stage perceptual processing (ibid 2005).

2.0c Psychoactive Substances and Altered States of Consciousness

Psychoactive substances are central to the experience of psytrance, though not all psytrance scene participants use them. My conceptualisation of space in this chapter and the psytrance experience in general throughout this thesis is contingent on drawing comparisons between different *Altered States of Consciousness* or ASCs. I define an ASC as a profound change in a person's usual waking consciousness that causes them to experience reality differently. ASCs can be induced in many ways, for example, through the use of psychoactive substances, trancing, meditation, hypnosis, sensory deprivation or psychosis. Some understanding of the similarity between these states is necessary to follow my argument, so here I review some studies from the fields of psychology and neuroscience. However, I do this with the caveat that since I myself do not have a background in science, some comparisons I draw elsewhere in the thesis will be non-science based. This is an issue inherent to studying psytrance at the intersection of different fields, some of which use

empirical methods and others that rely on qualitative or subjective ones, so I ask that the reader treat each source accordingly as it arises.

Differently induced ASCs are not exactly the same, but have shared ‘family’ traits, for example, an ASC brought on through the use of LSD is not the same as one caused by psychosis, but has enough in common to be used in psychiatric studies researching psychosis. Adolf Dittrich (1998) formulated the APZ (Abnormal Mental States) self-report questionnaire and two later versions, the OAV and 5D-ASC (Dittrich et al. 2010) which have been used to assess ASCs for nearly 20 years and across dozens of different studies internationally. These questionnaires have been used to assess ASCs induced by psychoactive substances such as psilocybin, ketamine, MDMA and DMT but also ASCs that are caused by things other than the use of these substances, like psychosis and sensory deprivation as in the work of Erich Studerus, Alex Gamma and Franz Vollenweider (Studerus et al. 2010). As Adam Halberstadt outlines (2015), the original APZ contains 158 items covering a broad range of possible experiences during ASCs. The core dimensions of the APZ are Oceanic Boundlessness (OB), which includes positive derealisation, positive depersonalization, altered sense of time, positive mood and mania-like experience; Anxious Ego Dissolution (AED), which includes symptoms of anxious derealisation, thought disorder, delusion and fear of loss of control, and Visionary Restructuralisation (VR), which includes elementary hallucinations, visual pseudo-hallucinations, pseudo-synaesthesia, changes in the meaning of percepts, facilitated recollection and facilitated imagination (Halberstadt 2015).

Other studies have sought to improve on Dittrich’s scale, expanding the dimensions to garner more detail about ASCs. Studerus, Gamma and Vollenweider suggest eleven new categories through a study assessing the experiences of people taking psilocybin, ketamine, or MDMA. The dimensions they suggest are; experience of unity, spiritual experience, blissful state, insightfulness, disembodiment, impaired control and cognition, anxiety, complex imagery, elementary imagery, audio-visual synaesthesiae and changed meaning of percepts (Studerus et al. 2010). These scales have been created and refined in order to provide a way to make the methodology of studying ASCs, whether induced by psychoactive substances, mental illness or other factors, more thorough and rigorous.

As my study is qualitative, I use terms both from the original APZ scale and its updated versions. As these scales are devised from the self-reporting of psychedelic states by participants in the studies, any of the terms are useful to compare the effects of psychoactive substances with statements from my study and also for finding correlates between experiences of ASCs and the psychedelic characteristics of psytrance music.

Psychoactive substances have also been used to theorize about the evolution of the human brain. Robin Carhart-Harris et al (2015b) argue that the psychedelic ASC is a primitive or primary state of consciousness that predates modern human consciousness. In normal waking consciousness, the brain operates at a critical level on the edge of disorder, constraining and suppressing entropy. Primary consciousness is associated with unconstrained cognition and less order in the brain, or a higher entropy, while secondary consciousness is associated with more order and constraints in the brain's processes. When psychedelic states are entered there is a collapse of the normal, default-mode network which decouples from the medial temporal lobes (Carhart-Harris et al. 2015b).

So which psychoactive substances are relevant to this thesis? Five psychoactive substances that are commonly found in the psytrance scene and the British free party scene are LSD, MDMA, Psilocybin, DMT and Ketamine. MDMA has complex effects on mood. Most widely known to generate feelings of euphoria, it can also induce negative feelings as well because it functions as a general mood enhancer. Studies have shown that its effects can depend on prior expectations, and the setting in which it is taken (Parrott 2013). MDMA produces visual disturbances but they are slight compared to the intense visual warping and imagery caused by LSD.

LSD induces alterations in waking consciousness that can last 12 - 16 hours depending on the dose - 3 or 4 times as long as an MDMA experience. Effects include visual disturbances and hallucinations, audio-visual synaesthesia and sensations of derealisation and depersonalization, which are generally experienced as positive to the user. As Mendel Kaelen et al have demonstrated, LSD enhances emotional responses to music, especially wonder, power, transcendence and tenderness (Kaelen et al. 2016). It has similar visual effects as psilocybin (the active compound in magic mushrooms) but scores higher for oceanic boundlessness, ego-dissolution, and visionary restructuralization (for example audio-visual synaesthesia). It also shares qualities with DMT and ketamine, especially in terms of visual effects, but scores higher in oceanic boundlessness compared to these (Schmid et al. 2015).

Ketamine distorts time and space and causes sensory loss, dissociation and hallucinations that can expand to out of body or near death experiences (Corazza et al. 2013). At higher doses, users enter the 'K-hole' where they feel completely detached from their normal reality and like LSD, ketamine induces schizophrenic type effects in the brain. DMT is a hallucinogenic substance which has intense but short-lived effects. Trips have a duration of fifteen minutes or so and people often report being completely detached from reality, space, time and their normal sense of identity. There is evidence to suggest that DMT mimics some

of the positive effects of schizophrenia whilst ketamine mimics some of the negative and catatonic effects (Halberstadt 2015).

2.1 Sound Objects

What is a sound object? Albert Bregman's work on auditory scene analysis (1993, 1994) theorizes that we group sounds into streams, treat as objects and attach meaning to them. Whether those audio streams remain separate or integrate depends on whether sound objects are proximal or distal within frequency, time or spatial dimensions. Spatial dimensions and sound objects interact synergistically or can conflict with each-other, producing many perceptual effects. The *cocktail party effect* is a theory of selective attention, where people can choose to focus on one particular audio stream within a melee of competing streams, bringing it from the background to the fore (1994: 529-31).

Composer Pierre Schaeffer's *Treatise on Musical Objects: An Essay Across Disciplines* (1966/2017: 207) states that a sound object is an *intentional unit*, formed in our consciousness through our own mental activity. A sound object has features that we can differentiate and categorize and it can be inspected and explored. Moreover, its features may evolve over time or it may have envelopes applied, the contour of which can be mentally traced, such that we 'recode' it into a gestural object based on the capabilities and limitations of our own embodiment. As composer Michel Chion affirms in his guide to Schaeffer's work, a sound object may consist of anything between the piece as a whole and a single point within the piece (1983: 26-30).

Rolf Inge Godøy (2006: 153), citing Schaeffer, describes three categories of sound object: impulsive types (short, single sounds), iterative types (repeated) and sustained types (longer duration). These are linked to sound-producing gestures: impulsive types are associated with punctual gestures, like hitting a drum, iterative gestures are repeated and sustained types are linked to continuous gestures. Godøy suggests the terms *micro*, referring to the underlying sonic substrate of the music, *meso*, referring to the mid-level where gestural sound objects are found and *macro*, the continuity level of a piece where we experience successions of sound gestures and images (ibid 2006: 152). In this section I focus on the meso level.

James Gibson's theory of *affordances*, outlined in his work *The Ecological Approach to Visual Perception* (2014), holds that when a human being perceives an object it asks itself "what can I do with this?" Within the theory, objects of affordance are not contextualised within the world governed by physics but in an ecology that is loaded with potential meaning (ibid 2014: 33-46). This theory has been applied to musical perception of sound objects in a

sonic environment (see for example Krueger 2011). Alessandro Altavilla, Baptiste Caramiaux and Atau Tanaka (2013) state that musical affordance is a complex construct of physical and sonic affordance with cultural association. They isolated sounds from their physical and cultural context to look at what affordances they themselves would provide, but participants in the study still linked the disembodied sounds with real world objects and gestures associated with those objects. If they could identify the source of the sound, they described it as the physical object producing the sound, for example drums, and also talked about the physical movements associated with the object, such as hitting the drums. Sound sources that were less easy to identify were described with terminology related to digital processes such as “computer error beep” or analytically, such as “a wavy sound”. References to computers and drums indicate that they were still attempting to understand sounds by placing them in a cultural context where they are connected to a network of associations. These associations are like Lacan’s signifying chains (1992/2007: 44-46) which are signifiers that are linked together in a particular way that is affected by surrounding culture and other factors. Monty Adkins applies Lacan’s metaphor to music, coining the term ‘acoustic chain’ to describe the network of associations triggered by musical affordances (1999).

In the study by Altavilla et al, if sounds could not be identified as coming from a real world object, participants turned to spatial language (for example, left and right), or geometric figures to describe their movement (Altavilla et al. 2013). This is significant when thinking about psytrance and its foregrounding of synthetic noises. Psytrance lends itself very well to this kind of spatial and geometric description, as can be seen in the quotes from participants in this chapter. Their research suggests that when a human being perceives a sound as coming from a source their default association will be with a physical object or a gesture or action associated with the object. If, however, they cannot identify a source, or make a cultural association and are left with analytical language, this raises an interesting question: is it easier to anthropomorphise a ‘wavy’ sound or a “long, floating sound” in the words of one of the participants in my study, given its apparent independence of movement and the lack of connection with physical, culturally situated objects?

Research has been undertaken into the relationship between texture and structure in music and what effect these have on attention and perception. James Tenney looked at these relationships through the lens of information theory, theorizing that textural structure is a communication from the composer and the texture itself is a message (1988: 28-49). As Phillip Tagg explains in *Music’s Meanings*, many factors dictate whether the message is

received and understood properly, or *decoded*, by the listener. He calls these barriers to communication *codal interference* and *codal incompetence* (2011: 172-85).

Timbre has been shown to elicit complex and varied verbal associations and research such as that by Painter and Koelsch (2011) has also found that single sounds can activate representations of meaningful concepts in a similar fashion to chords and musical excerpts. Further, no musical context is necessary to activate representations and there seems to be a distinct pathway for the activations of the representations which is independent of those involved in emotional response (Painter and Koelsch 2011). Timbre is the key, foregrounded element in psytrance. One survey participant indicated that an important vehicle of psychedelicalness was "using timbral modulation of sound instead of relying on a melodic foundation". One of the most common answers given by participants to the question of what the psychedelic elements in psytrance are, was the enigmatic, quirky sounds which characterize it. Interview participant Lainey, said:

Little sounds...it's the way in which the sounds are made. So there are normally...a lot of saw wave sounds with a lot of effects basically; you know that's what makes them psychedelic is just they're very processed...they're just characteristic sounds aren't they in psytrance? The sort of squelchy, sort of liquid-y, very quirky sounds.

In her work on proprioception and musical consciousness Alicia Acitores identifies two concepts: *bodiliness* and *grabbiness*. Bodiliness means that exploring different things causes us to change how our body moves, and grabbiness, means that we perceive objects because we move towards them, guided by the external sensory stimuli that our body perceives and automatically orients itself towards - in other words, the extent to which auditory stimuli are able to grab our attention (2011: 215-30). Grabby elements in music are those more likely to catch our attention, for example, a dissonant chord or in the case of psytrance, an unexpected quirky sound object in the mix. Enigmatic psytrance sounds can be semi-pitched, like the modified saw waves Lainey talks about, typically in the mid to high frequency range with various effects applied. Unpitched sounds are often crafted from white noise - or more accurately, pink noise. White noise cannot be combined, has no spectral clarity and contains every possible frequency on the spectrum. Pink noise is white noise filtered to shape towards the range of human hearing using Fletcher-Munson curves, which take into account that different frequencies are perceived at different intensities by the human ear and makes the intensity even across the whole range of frequencies. Modifying pink or white noise by modulating aspects such as frequency and amplitude and using envelopes to gradate these changes, is like a sculptor starting with a block of medium and carving or chipping away to reveal a form.

What meaning we ascribe to different timbres depends on our individual embodiment, for instance our style of bodily comportment, our lived experiences and memories and the layers of metaphors attached to these as a result of the culture in which we live. The main types of sounds are grouped according to their properties, for instance, *bright* sound, *noisy* sound and *rough* sound (Wallmark 2014: 56-64). Bright sound is where the *spectral centroid* or 'centre of gravity' of the sound is loaded in the high end of the frequency spectrum: in other words, the sound is rich in high frequency components. The human ear is highly attuned to these kinds of sounds which makes them feel intrusive, likely for evolutionary purposes, for example the sound of a crying baby which necessarily grabs our attention. These types of sound activate the parts of the brain involved in the induction of the fight or flight response which allows us to quickly and easily identify the source of a sound and its location. Bright tones change according to their proximity, fading the further away you get from them and are muffled by obstructions for example, when brass instruments apply a cup mute to produce a muffled, darker tone.

Where timbre is characterized by a stable and evenly spread harmonic series it sounds clear, for example, the tone of a clarinet. In contrast, noisy sound consists of a less regular, less periodic and more disordered spectrum; it has inharmonicity, which is where energy is concentrated outside of the series that is associated with the fundamental frequency. *Spectral flatness* is a quality relating to the smoothness or spikiness of the signal. Noisy sound tends towards a smooth spectral flatness which means that the sound is distributed across a range of frequencies in a non-periodic way resulting in a complex field of frequencies for example, white or pink noise. Rough noise contains some kind of sensory dissonance for example *beating*, where two sine waves are very close in frequency and there is a sensation of rubbing or friction as the two frequencies vie for primacy in a person's auditory perception (Wallmark 2014: 64). This effect is related to inharmonicity in noisy sounds and is a factor in the way we perceive dissonant notes and chords. The enigmatic sounds that characterize psytrance have noisy and rough properties. As one participant observed: "For myself, sounds that have been frequency or amplitude modulated in some way that there is fast beating in the 10 to 30 Hz range (on the periphery of human hearing) are particularly psychedelic."

In this case, the sensory dissonance created by the beating and the fact it occurs on the periphery of hearing gives the sound a sense of alterity. Noisiness and roughness in a sound give a feeling of exertion - similar properties are found in the sound of an angry, shouting voice or fearful scream. These properties are used to that effect in heavy metal, where they signify anger, evil, menace and madness. Sounds with these properties are deployed in a

more subtle way in psytrance; they allude to urgency and energy rather than anger, to playfulness and trickery rather than evil (though evil or menace may be more implicit in the noises and samples of dark psy or forest psy) and to the edge of insanity, something akin to the experience of taking LSD, rather than madness per se. One survey participant indicated that:

...for me, the psychedelia lies in the use of unique, quirky sounds that are not found in most other forms of (electronic) music. Heavy use of modulation and automation, not to mention odd audio trickery via 'esoteric' FX plug-ins (the Uhbik G grain delay is immense for this!).

Applying envelopes with effects to a sound shapes them into a sound object. For example, envelopes can be applied to a noisy and/or rough sound to modify the spectral content of the frequency in an incremental, smooth curve, tapering the ends of the sound (the attack, decay and release). This results in the kinds of sounds referred to by Lainey in the quote at the beginning of the section: liquid, globular noises that the stomach and intestines inside a body might emit. Depending on which culture the listener is from, these may or may not be humorous. In British culture the grotesque and scatological are common sources of humour and these sounds are commonly found in British psytrance, so there may be a correlation between the two: I will come back to examine this in more detail in chapter 4.

In my interview and survey data there were many references to properties of sound objects being psychedelic, like "geometric [shapes] & colours". We are able to get a sense of colour and geometry from sound because of synesthetic perceptual processes. Synaesthesia can be described as an isomorphism between sensory modalities. As Bulat Galayev affirms, there are synaestheses that are tied to culture, to time period and to the individual person, but some are universally shared, for example, pitch and size: a low pitch which signify a thick, large or opaque quality and a high pitched sound would signify a thin or acute quality (2007: 285). As I explained earlier, this is because of the mental association with the size of the object which would be required to produce these noises for example, a flute which has a high pitched range is long and thin. Sometimes a persona is implied by a particular sound: a low frequency sound may signify a fat body, and a high-frequency sounds may signify a thin or tall body. Further associations made with those personas could, for example, depend on the person's culture and its attitudes towards body size, or the listener's own body image. Other examples of this sonic synaesthesia are for low pitch, dark, heavy, and short; and for high pitch, light, light in weight and tall. Where we perceive sounding bodies in space, we connote depth from texture, the vertical from melody, the horizontal from the form taken by the sound matter and colour from timbre and movement (ibid 2007: 286).

One of my study participants noted the psychedelicalness of: "space, [and] twisted sounds" in psytrance. This is achieved through the use of audio effects, which modulate various aspects of the sound and are applied with envelopes that gradually applied or retracted over time, resulting in the illusion of geometric shapes twisting into different dimensions of the sonic 3D space. Space between the sounds give them definition as sound objects and Psychoactive substances heighten this effect: as Jorg Fachner notes, when people take LSD, sound objects may seem more distinct (2011: 272). Length in terms of time gives a sense physical length on a horizontal axis.

As mentioned before, sounds moving across the space give a sense of the size of that space. They also give the musical space as a whole a dynamism and flow. A few of the ways in which sound objects can be made to move across the space. Modifying the frequency of a sound acts on the vertical pitch scale and gives the impression of the sound going up or down. Modifying the amplitude gives the impression of the sound getting closer to the listener or further away. Panning the sound moves it from left to right in the mix, horizontally to the listener. Another effect is created by sounds moving around their own centre of gravity. As a survey participant expressed:

I like constant flow between anything that sounds like it's physically twisting or spiralling in a continuous motion, or being pulled apart or being pushed into a central point - they can best be described by their effect - producing uninterrupted suspension of disbelief.

What is the combined effect of a collection of sound objects in the mix, taking into consideration the qualities described in the last three subsections? For one, layering sounds gives a sense of a denser collection of sound objects. The sound objects also evolve over time, switching between layers and functional roles in the music for example, from a percussive element to a proto-melody. This crossing over has an element of uncertainty and ambiguity which is very psychedelic. There is also a sense of transgressing perceptual boundaries which is key to psychedelic experiences. One of my study participants spoke about "sounds that morph as they progress, for example, a percussive element that gradually becomes more melodic and turns into a melody line or vice-versa." Another mentioned "repetitive or subtly-changing motifs whose sounds change over time".

By combining all of the properties discussed in this section in various combinations or by layering multiple effects with multiple modulations and envelopes, you end up with shapes that are irregular and vary widely in texture, morphing from one state to another and changing dimensions. Sounds that morph and change dimension can seem like bodies in and of themselves. As mentioned before, sounds can be so texturally quirky, that they take

on a persona. Several participants mentioned the combined effect of a group of these personified sounds. Interview participant Sam talked about “the little subtle noises, sense of space. A soundscape, like in a forest with forest creatures appearing at points around you” and a survey participant commented on “the use of space within the stereo field along with sound effects and leads used to play in the space more.” Note the use of the word ‘play’: this is a sign that the sounds are being personified or anthropomorphised by the producer. The survey participant in question happens to be British and allusions to play, quirkiness, and humour were frequent among British participants. I will return to this observation and discuss it in more detail in chapter 4.

My final thought for this section is about how psychoactive substances effect the perception of sound objects. Allison Feduccia and Christine Duvauchelle showed how audio stimulation increases the rewarding effects of MDMA and this kind of stimulation (particularly where there are combined sensorial stimuli) can activate the same neural systems that psychoactive substance use activates (2008). Psytrance is rich in quirky and interesting sounds that stimulate the listener or dancer and so these would surely be even more rewarding with MDMA added to the experience. The effects of LSD include visual disturbances and hallucinations, audio-visual synaesthesia and enhanced suggestibility, so you would expect that using this substance whilst listening and/or dancing to psytrance would facilitate the synesthetic creation of mental images from sound objects, imbue them with more character and perhaps make them seem more real in a sense that they may influence what visual disturbances are experienced by the user (Carhart-Harris et al. 2015a).

Having explored the characteristics of the sound objects that populate musical space, I now discuss how a sense of space is created in different dimensions of the music, particularly the sound stage that gives us the context for the music and sets up the topological environment.

2.2 Sense of Space

Peter Sloterdijk talks about spaces where we seek refuge and recreate the comfort of the womb or internal psychological states by building a literal or figurative enclosed dwelling place (Elden and Mendieta 2009, Sloterdijk 2011: 639) To Sloterdijk, we are “space creating beings” who thrive on proximity to others and cannot exist outside the shared spaces we create. (Couture 2009, Sloterdijk 2011: 336). Space is a key theme in psytrance, whether it is in the music, on an enclosed dance-floor or under a canopy of trees. Psytrance music is a kind of microsphere, a virtual, enclosed space modelled on internal psychological space.

In *Considering Space in Music* (2009: 164), William Moylan organises the spatial qualities of recorded music into two structural levels: overall sound and individual sound sources. At the

overall sound level, the spatial qualities consist of the dimensions of the sound stage and the characteristics of the *Perceived Performance Environment* (PPE). The sound stage is the area containing all the sounds in a piece aggregated into one group and gives the impression of having physical size dependent on the individual sounds contained within it: the perception of width comes from the sounds that are furthest left or right in the stereo field and depth is created by the sounds that are the closest to and most distant from the listener. The sound stage can change in size as the piece goes on (ibid 2009: 164-65).

The PPE is the overall space within which we perceive the piece existing and its characteristics are created by changes applied globally, such as frequency alterations to the overall sound in the piece that unfold over time or reverb time and density, and the characteristics of prominent or unique sounds within the piece. According to Moylan, the PPE may be revealed gradually over the course of a piece or there can be several PPEs within a piece, creating different environments that unfold over time. As the listener moves through them they lend different meanings to the sound objects because of their changing relationship to them (Moylan 2009: 180). This is a technique I have noticed in the psytrance tracks I have analysed, giving for example the impression of travelling through a tunnel and then breaking out into a wide open space.

Individual sounds can be placed in locations at distance or laterally in the stereo field, and can have characteristics applied to them which give them their own micro-environment which may differ to the macro-environment of the sound stage (Moylan 2009: 164-65). For example, a sound may have reverb or delay applied that gives the impression it is within a particular size space and that may contrast with the perceived size of the sound stage. This can create the effect of a sound world which is alien, as it doesn't function within the laws of physics of the real world.

Moylan's designation of the structural levels and their characteristics refer to recorded music, which differs from music like psytrance in that most of its constituent sounds will be synthesized and any samples of recorded instruments and environmental noises are generally heavily treated with effects. I think that in the context of psytrance, the properties of the sound stage and PPE overlap so much that they are to all practical purposes, the same thing. Participants in my study referred to *the mix* when talking about the entirety of the sound stage. For these reasons I will refer to either *the mix* or *sound stage* throughout this chapter and the rest of the thesis, with the understanding that in relation to psytrance at least, it encapsulates all the properties of the PPE as Moylan describes it.

As mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, in psytrance the bassline and pulse form a plane of immanence. Sound ‘particles’ coalesce into assemblages, manifesting sonic objects with different textures and shapes. They emerge from this plane or plateau and are soon reincorporated into it again, like excited states in a quantum field.⁹ Each track forms a body without organs that is like a map of a terrain rather than a solid substance (Cox 2006). In Deleuzian terms, the ‘longitudinal’ dimensions of this body are defined as the relationships between its parts or particles and molecules, in terms of speed and motion. The ‘latitudinal’ aspect consists of the potential for intensity and affect a body has which distinguish it from other bodies and which we experience in a qualitative sense. These bodies or tracks are open ended and can be connected with other bodies to form larger provisional assemblages; the mix or the DJ set and also the wider body of psytrance music in general. The longitudinal/latitudinal way of looking at psytrance lends itself to topological and geometric descriptions which complement current understanding in the field of the cognitive neuroscience of music (Cox 2006).

As Juha Ojala states, musical topologies are representative of mental topologies and spaces (Ojala 2009), so examining how people describe and derive meaning from musical topologies should reveal much about their identity and culture. Participants in my study referred to space in a number of different ways in their responses, reflecting the space that can be found in psytrance in many different parameters and layers of the music. I have split this section into five of the areas which stood out as being most important to participants: the sense of space in the overall mix of a track, space in metric structures, sounds objects that populate musical space, space and subjectivity and the enhanced feeling of musical space created by psychoactive substance use.

2.2a. The Mix

One of the ways in which a sense of space is created is in the mix. Mixing is the process of setting overall levels, applying stereo panning, equalization, effects etc. once all the individual parts in the track have been worked on. Producers also refer to the mix in terms of all the tracks parameters and sound stage taken as a whole: this is the definition I am using for the purposes of this chapter. When responding to my question about what the psychedelic qualities in psytrance consist of, a couple of participants highlighted the importance of "The use of space within the stereo field along with sound effects and leads

⁹ Quantum field theory is a framework within theoretical physics that looks at particles as *field quanta*, or excited states of an underlying physical field. I use this as a metaphor in the same style as Deleuze when he writes about particles forming assemblages.

used to play in the space...." and "Depth - time based FX to imply a different physical space."

Gradual change of musical parameters in the mix give a sense of direction, distance and locomotion. Within these gradually changing parameters a sense of space is created in a number of ways. Firstly, the impression of three dimensions is created through the apparent movement of sounds within the mix. Effects like reverb and delay give you a sense of the boundaries of the sonic space, and sound objects moving from left to right in the stereo field give a sense of length and breadth within that space. Individual sounds may have an envelope applied to them, incrementally modifying the amplitude, delay or reverb over time, giving a sense of them moving closer or further away; where an envelope is applied to frequency the sounds seem to go up and down in vertical pitch space: this horizontal and vertical movement within individual sounds gives the impression of depth. A sense of space is also found in sound objects' proximity to each other in terms of their relative pitch and the amount of time between each occurrence, for example.

The comparative size of the sound compared with the entirety of the mix implies a sense of scale, for example a short and high frequency sound presenting as being small in relation to a mix that has wide pitch boundaries and a lot of reverb applied. These little noises in the vastness of sonic space give a sensation of outer-space and the comparatively tiny bodies within it. The space between the deep bass and the higher frequency leads and sounds feels expansive. Space between the sounds in terms of linear time was also an important feature in psychedelicalness for some of my study participants: "Less is more (when the sounds have space to breathe)."

The psychoactive substances likely to be used when experiencing psytrance enhance the sense of space in the mix - and the music may intentionally reflect changes to temporal perception caused by the substances, also. As Fachner notes, when people take LSD, the space between sound objects may seem to dilate or stretch out. Listening becomes more focussed and intense and listening strategies may change, so that the listener sees a different overview or focusses in on a different structure in the music (2011: 270).

Hyperfrontality causes sensory perception to become more integrated and causes a flooding of information in to the dorso-lateral pre-frontal cortex (DLPFC). There is an overload in the area associated with working memory and lowered activity in other areas of the brain which in essence blocks the normal inhibition sensory data, so that one is able to see, hear, feel etc. more than you would be able to without having taken the psychoactive substance (Fachner, 2011: 273).

2.2b. Metric Structures

Space in the overall metric structure of psytrance is a characteristic feature. The driving motion of the pulse in psytrance and the creation of space through reverb and delay has the combined effect on the listener of flying through a cavernous space or as Rietveld has it “an endlessly spiralling tunnel...an infinite vortex, a hi-tech sonic mandala” (2010: 70). Sound objects travel around the mix adding this effect by giving the impression of ever changing scenery rushing by. Psytrance has a lot of features in common with minimalism, in that it is non-pulsed, repetitive and develops very gradually in a meandering *nomad thought* style. Sound events are spaced out and seem momentous when they occur, giving a sense of music on a larger scale. Psytrance tracks are usually mixed into sets and different artists’ sets are then blended into each other at the seams to form one long continuous piece of music, which participants may dance to for days at a time. Psychoactive substances enhance the feeling of space in the temporal parameters of psytrance: as Fachner states, there is a change to metric frame of reference with psychoactive substances and so it follows that one’s perception of musical elements will be changed (Fachner, 2011). A participant noted the importance of gradual change, saying that psychedelicalness for them involves

Slowly building towards something, elements creating an atmosphere/a story (samples of speech or everyday-noises, or drawn-out sounds), when the music conveys a general sense of direction or purpose.

2.2c. Sound Objects

A sense of space is also given through the sound objects in the mix: firstly, through timbre. The high volume of music played at psytrance parties gives the music a very physical ‘largeness’ in that it is powerful enough to reverberate in your chest. Individual sounds used in the music can have a sense of ‘thickness’ or ‘tallness’, for example, in acoustic deep sounds would be produced by a larger instrument, whilst a long sound at high pitch might sound thin or tall, like the kind of instrument that would produce such a noise, like a flute. In these cases it is the interior of the sounds themselves that are spacious. This participant thought the most psychedelic elements of psytrance were “Fat and organic synths, and deep and hypnotic beats”.

Atmospheric, elongated sounds were also mentioned a number of times by participants as being key elements in psytrance, for example this reference to “Long floating (spacy) sounds.” These kinds of sounds give an impression of weightlessness, perhaps signifying an environment in the vacuum of space. Maybe the listener empathises, feeling a sense of

weightlessness in their own body, or perhaps the weight of their body and thus their physical embodiment itself is emphasised through comparison with the object. People who have used MDMA describe feelings of floating and sensuality: see for example the reports of participants in Richard Cohen's work on ecstasy, pills which contain MDMA (1998: 80-81), or Audrey Redfield's work on EDM and transpersonal experiences (Redfield 2017). Users of Ketamine have also reported floating sensations - see for example the work of Cheng-Ta Li et al (2016) or Karen Joe-Laidler and Geoffery Hunt (Joe-Laidler and Hunt 2008). 'Floaty' sounds may therefore be particularly appealing to those using MDMA or Ketamine. Perhaps this kind of sound may even trigger feelings of sensuality by association in people who have previously used either substance?

The pitch of sound objects has a spatial aspect as well. Sarah Dolscheid et al show that language effects the perception of pitch (2011, 2013). The pitch of sound objects has a spatial aspect as well. Sarah Dolscheid et al show that language effects the perception of pitch (2011, 2013). They compare Dutch speakers, who describe pitch on a scale from high to low, and Farsi speakers who describe it as thin to thick. To reiterate, our perception of pitch is likely related to things in the physical world, for instance instruments with a larger resonance chamber produce a lower or fuller pitch, as do thicker strings. Likewise taller people tend to have longer necks and thus a lower pitched voice (Dolscheid et al. 2011, Dolscheid et al. 2013). Elena Rusconi et al have established that even right or left handedness affects how one perceives pitch (Rusconi et al. 2006). Looking at the way pitch space is represented by people of different experiences, body capabilities and cultures could therefore be another avenue to explore how local styles and local preferences for styles of psytrance emerge.

2.2d. Space and Subjectivity

Although psytrance is largely desubjectified, participants still talked a lot about creating a sense of place - sometimes just a general alterity but often more complex worlds or rich soundscapes in which individual sounds, or the music taken as a whole, takes on its own identity: "Abstract organic soundscapes." Interview participant Sam likes to create: "the soundtrack for an alien world almost, or a soundtrack to biomechanical world", while another participant said:

I look to create a believable sound stage that the listener could imagine they were physically in, and then fill it with sounds that are new, or have no correspondence to 'real world' sounds.

Samples from films and television programmes of sci-fi style sounds or about outer-space and aliens and 'real world' field samples - sea birds, sounds of large waterfalls or waves - all

imply expansive vistas in a more signified way: “Elements creating an atmosphere/a story (samples of speech or everyday-noises, or drawn-out sounds)”.

2.2e. Psychoactive Substances

Lastly, I want to consider how the use of psychoactive substances might affect the perception of space in psytrance. As Botond Vitos explains in his article on virtuality and psytrance, MDMA and LSD both enhance bodily sensations promoting deeper immersion in the dance-floor experience and enhancing the effects of the conceptual space created by the music (2014). Most psychoactive substances change the user’s perception of the passage of time, particularly hallucinogens like LSD: time may seem to be dilated and the user enters a liminal state that is enhanced by, or merges with, the imagined space created by the music and combined audio-visual technologies of the dance-floor. Speaking of time dilation, this is an essential trait of the psytrance experience: tracks are open-ended assemblages that are mixed into sets lasting several hours and these sets themselves are merged into each other to provide continuous music for perhaps 24 - 48 hours at a psytrance party. The expectation of the partygoers is that the event will stretch out for this amount of time and their expectation of the music also adjusts to this. In other words, they will expect an extended plane of consistency with fewer rewards and peak experiences than other types of music. LSD can last 12 - 16 hours depending on the dose and so complements this extended musical experience. Research such as that conducted by Michael Davis and Michael Sheard (Davis and Sheard 1975) and Yasmin Schmid et al (2015) has shown that LSD also has the ability to make the mundane seem novel, through inhibiting habituation of the acoustic startle response in the brain. This would also complement a drawn out experience, making the musical rewards and peaks seem more momentous when they eventually occur.

Many psychoactive substances give a feeling of oceanic boundlessness, which might include sensations of merging with your environment, feeling past, present and future all at once or feeling like you are dreaming. LSD scores higher on the 5D-ASC scale in the oceanic boundlessness dimension than other psychoactive substances like psilocybin, DMT and Ketamine (Schmid et al., 2015). The ability of LSD to enhance emotional response to music like wonder, power and transcendence would make sensations of expanded space and time particularly meaningful and awe inspiring (Kaelen et al. 2016). Psychoactive substances promote and influence the creation of a psychedelic conceptual space and allow listeners/dancers to fully inhabit that imagined space.

Having explored the construction of a sonic environment in psytrance, an inner, psychedelic conceptual space based on this and some of the sound objects that populate it, I will now come back to consider the body and ask how the body can experience this conceptual space and how it interacts with sound objects in the space.

2.3 The Virtual Body

In order to discuss the body in virtual space it is necessary to talk about the body dancing in physical space, because the topology of virtual space is analogous to physical space.

Topological concepts have been used in the analysis of musical gestures. Luis Naveda and Marc Leman, for example, posit that dances are music driven explorations of space, where metrical cues from the music are extrapolated into the space of the gestures in the dance (Naveda and Leman 2010).

As discussed in the section on sound objects, sounds may trigger images of actions in our minds and actions may trigger images of sound in our minds. Dancing can be viewed as a way of physically realising sound objects and sonic patterns with our bodies, a focussed body listening or deep listening that can also allow us to participate in the music, exploring its sonic topography and shaping how we hear it. As Joel Krueger confirms, this process allows us to enter the imagined space created by the music, immersing ourselves in it through interacting with sound objects and responding to their affordances (2011). On the psytrance dance-floor, dancers are aware of others around them dancing and their responses to the music. There are a set of affordances provided by other dancers and dancers movements cannot help but be influenced by the movements of other people's bodies. Not only are they dancing and responding to the music and each other in the real, but they all have entered into the sonic space and are interacting within it together in a shared experience (ibid 2011).

In my research study many participants alluded to inner space, the internal experience of psychedelics and music. One stated:

One thing I think is especially important about Psy-Trance is the creation of atmosphere "inside the person's head". When they close their eyes whilst under the influence of a psychedelic substance: What do they see? What do they think about? Which associations do they make with the sounds that are being heard?

Another participant said that for them "it's more important that the track as a whole triggers an inner journey through imaginal space." These quotes highlight one of the most important aspects of psytrance: the creation of an imagined space inside the mind of the listener or dancer in which they interact with sound objects. How is this interaction achieved? Psytrance

music has a number of properties which connect the dancer to the imagined space: the visceral bass resonates in the body's cavities, giving the sensation of the body becoming one with the music. Entrainment of the body to the pulse created by the bassline also heightens this effect. The characteristic 'wet', 'squelchy' psytrance sounds that are redolent of the body's internal, fluid processes bring the grotesque together with the transcendent. The physical body experiences in this setting sensations of movement, fluidity, transcendence and/or a hyperreal, hyper-focussed experience of being embodied that stems from the elements of the grotesque in the music. Psychiatrist Humphry Osmond, who coined the word 'psychedelic', said: "To fathom Hell or soar angelic, just take a pinch of psychedelic" (Tanne, 2004). Psychoactive substances offer a way to vicariously explore the breadth of human experience: heaven, hell, transcendent and grotesque. The jarring disconnect between being possessed by feelings of soaring transcendence to suddenly having an acute awareness of one's guts or one's mortality creates a window through which the mind can explore new avenues of thought. One participant noted the importance of "the emotional connection to the sense of motion, traveling, going somewhere within your own mind, swimming in your own thoughts. Introspection."

Rietveld argues that these wobbly, squelchy sounds are central to the "spiritual experience of psytrance" (2010: 79). Making reference to Aldous Huxley (1954/2004), she suggests that the incompleteness and instability of a series of unexpected squelches can create a 'door of perception' that leads to feelings of transcendence. I agree, but would characterize the experience not as spiritual and ascendant but coming from a place of grotesque debasement. A humorous, *inverted sublimity* (Banki 2014), after the words of German author Johann Paul Friedrich Richter, is an apt description that has been used by Vitos in his work on Czech darkpsy (2009).

MDMA and LSD, both popular psychoactive substances in psytrance scenes, both enhance bodily sensations; they aid in immersion in the dance-floor experience, enhancing the effects of the conceptual space created by the music. As scholars like Botond Vitos (2014), Emília Simão and Paula Guerra (2016) have argued, it creates an experience akin to online virtual parties; for example, those that take place on the Second Life website which participants attend using a digital avatar. On psytrance dance-floors, the dancer's body is projected into the imagined space created by the music and psychedelic technologies. In other words, a virtual body or avatar is created from the dancer's body image which has the properties of their body schema.

The uniqueness of each individual's perception, including the variation of effects on perception from psychedelic technologies means that there is a participatory aspect to

listening and dancing to psytrance, which also has the effect on drawing the body into the musical space and making it one with the virtual projection of itself. One of my survey participants expressed it like this:

It [the music] must make your brain follow a certain flow on the sound, while not making it too obvious. Psychedelic for me means that your brain is easily able to virtually play a 3# lead sound that fits perfectly onto the two playing on the track already. It's all about inspiring the listener's brain to compose its own personal and very unique version of your track.

As Rachel Duerden observes in her article 'Dancing in the Imagined Space of Music' (2007), music transcends physical space but still expresses something intrinsically embodied and dancing human bodies are conduits for musical meaning. For instance, in psychedelic trance the tempo can be faster than the human body could manage to dance to if it were trying to move in time with every beat of the pulse. In this example the speed of the dancer's movements versus the speed of the music would create a difference which highlights both our embodiment and the limits of our bodies and the power of musical technologies to exceed our bodies' capabilities.

As Duerden notes, dance and music are metaphors of each other (2007). One art form makes 'holes' for the other to be apprehended: they draw so close that we can see their similarities but also their differences, something Nicolas Cook calls *gapping* (1998: 122). The dislocation plays the rational against the sensual and causes us to consider the relationship between the conscious mind and the sensing body, in terms of both their differences and the way they depend on each other (Duerden 2007). As a result of the gapping effect we may feel a sense of potential, as we are experiencing something that we don't normally experience in real life. This effect draws us into the imagined space of music and the musical space into the real; we move through and between the imagined space of music and the real physical space (Duerden 2007). In psytrance, this feeling is heightened by the influence of psychoactive substances; the virtual body becomes one with the physical body and gives a sense of the increased possibilities and capabilities of the virtual body being available to the physical one. In this way, the imagined space bleeds in to the real, and vice versa: the real and perceptual space are experienced together.

So far I have talked about how a feeling of space created in psytrance, how that space is populated by sound objects, what properties and meaning those sound objects have and how through the psytrance experience a virtual body is projected into imagined space. How does the virtual body interact with sonic objects within the imagined space created by the music and what meaning do these interactions articulate?

The starting point for this discussion is that we perceive sounds as the sounds of material things and, as Zachary Wallmark emphasizes in his work on timbre, embodiment and affect, we can't escape their materiality even if the sounds evoke ephemeral things like fantastical worlds or dreams (2014). To recap on Gibson's theory of affordances, when a human being perceived an object it asks itself "what can I do with this?" Within the theory objects of affordance are not contextualised within the world governed by physics but in an ecology that is loaded with potential meaning (Gibson 2014). As has been discussed previously in this chapter, perception is a motor mimetic process (Wallmark, 2014). To briefly review Acitores' concepts, bodiliness is how we move differently when exploring different things and grabbiness is the idea that we perceive objects because we move towards them, guided by the external sensory stimuli that our body perceives and automatically orients itself towards. These work together, perception and embodied response, in one system, assemblage or abstract machine. The virtual body 'roams' around the music perceiving different elements (grabbiness) and we then respond bodily to the elements we focus on (bodiliness). Our body may not actually move in response, but we respond virtually due to the body schema (Acitores 2011). For example, we experience melody because we are internally and virtually singing along with the music, or we experience a crescendo as an increasing tension in the muscles - bodiliness is the sensation experienced within the body in response to the musical stimuli.

As Gibson and Jen Jack Giesecking et al have argued, objects within an ecology may be visible or invisible - i.e. hidden from the body's perceptual field by obstructions (Gibson 2014, Giesecking et al. 2014). Sound objects in psytrance operate within a sonic ecology that is loaded with meaning and likewise may be partially obscured by each other or by layers of ambient noise. If the sound object is partially obscured it will affect the metaphorical meaning in the mind of the perceiver. In psytrance, for example, a 'small' sound object (for example, high pitched) is partly hidden, or it flees away quickly into the distance, we may anthropomorphise it as a small, timid creature. If the sound recurs with a dotted rhythm, we might think of a playful sprite, bouncing around in the mix, glimpsed here or there and at other times 'hiding' behind other sounds. In contrast a low pitched, noisy sound object which is prominent in the mix and which has definition by being separate from other sounds - in other words, not obscured or hidden - then we may connote 'boldness' in its character.

Sound objects may make appear prominent in less obvious ways, that go beyond their relative volume compared to other sounds - perhaps an unusual timbre or a sequence of sounds that are particularly emotive. Murray Schafer talks about 'touch at a distance', which is the capacity of sounds to strongly affect listeners though they seem far away from us in on

the sound stage (1994). An example of this, as suggested by George Revill, would be listening to someone giving a rousing political speech, from the back of the audience at distance from the speaker (2015).

Depending upon their timbre and their perceived location in the mix, whether proximal or distal to the body, we may perceive sound objects as having affordances. In the physical world the surfaces of objects of perception afford body comportment, movement, collision or manipulation, for example, to which our bodies respond with types of behaviour. Tools are hand held and provide very unique affordances to primates like human beings who, in comparison with other animals, have special capabilities due to the dexterity of their hands and fingers (Giesecking et al. 2014). We may unconsciously respond to sound objects in the mix by considering whether they are the right size for us to hold, whether a 'wet' sound object may slip from our grasp or whether to 'dodge' a spinning sound object travelling at great speed.

As Gibson (2014) stated and others, such as Giesecking et al (2014), have maintained, in the ecology of affordances, there is no physical versus phenomenal divide. Applying Gibson's concepts to psytrance, we would be responding to and interacting with sound objects via our avatar within the musical space, our virtual body. As noted earlier however, psychedelic technologies and the act of dancing to the music allow the imagined space to bleed into the real and our physical bodies to feel part of the imagined space, augmented by the virtual body. It follows that the movements of our dancing physical body would be influenced by the sonic ecology we experience. People from different cultures and backgrounds will perceive different sets of affordances and respond in specific ways behaviourally, so the network of metaphors which arises from these interactions will be different from that of another individual.

Music is at the highest level of affordances of behaviour, at the same level as language and art, for example. The 'other' in the form of another human being provides very complex behavioural affordances that are reciprocated (Gibson 2014: 137). There are positive and negative affordances: a sharp knife can offer a positive affordance in being able to cut something, but also negative affordance in that the person using it may cut themselves. Gibson writes that animals and other human beings are also objects of affordance, though they are not limited to that definition, as they have their own agency. We can't be sure when interacting with an animate object, whether they will provide a positive or negative affordance - a human being could hit us unexpectedly rather than shake our hand (Giesecking et al. 2014).

The enigmatic sounds in psytrance seem like detached, animate objects which initiate their own movement from place to place and change their 'posture'. These sound objects have been described in a personified way by participants in my study, for instance characterising them as 'playful' or as 'forest animals' peeking out from behind trees. It seems as if we are not alone as a virtual body in sonic space, as it is populated with other virtual 'beings' in the form of these sound objects.

As previously noted, music is our experience of the music, so although on the dance-floor there is an intense feeling of camaraderie and shared experience, each listening, dancing body is having its own sensory experience and recreating the music for themselves. The united technologies of the dance-floor and the body thus become the instigators of creativity, interpretation and, ultimately, difference. To recap the three qualities of timbre Wallmark talks about, brightness is high frequency energy, noise is inharmonicity with a flat frequency spectrum and roughness is where there is an uneven timbre. Our bodies react similarly in a pre-noetic way to noise (Wallmark 2014).

Timbre is a verb or action and one of the ways we understand it is by its similarity to vocal expression, which in turn is coloured by the acoustic spaces of the body. Physical exertion causes a body to produce noisy vocal sounds that signify the body in extremis. With a very noisy, rough sound there may be a pre-noetic, negative reaction that is instinctive to most human beings, but the way that we ultimately appraise or think about a sound occurs in a later stage of the perceptual process and is determined by our own personal experiences and surrounding culture (Wallmark 2014). As mentioned before, MDMA increases stimulation, autonomic cardiac activity and activates the sympathetic nervous system. Both MDMA and LSD also increases blood pressure, body temperature, heart-rate and pupil-size (Schmid et al. 2015). It stands to reason that bodies in extremis caused by psychoactive substances might find rough and noisy sounds reflect their embodied experience.

Sound objects in psytrance lend themselves to anthropomorphism due to their quirky characteristics - as Stephen Handel writes "perceiving sound objects is much like perceiving faces" (1995: 458). It could therefore be said that we relate to sounds in psytrance as 'one of us', as other animate bodies - we empathise with them. If we are empathising with sound objects then, through a process of chiasm, perhaps we consider ourselves 'one of them', a desubjectified, animate object, free of the constraints of the default mode and thought patterns of our minds and perhaps this enhances the sensation of 'ego death' that many people seek through dance-floor experiences and psychoactive substance use.

Humans' experience timbre as shared: perception of timbre is therefore a social act (Wallmark 2014). As Mark Tramo et al have noted, for example, the ability to perceive pitch is a basic function of the auditory nervous system that not only supports the perception of melody and harmony in music, but is also crucial to prosody perception of speech, language and the recognition of voices and environmental sounds (Tramo et al. 2005). Leman says that music can be seen as a virtual social agent and an object of empathy because it signifies expressive movement of the human body (2008). Musical empathy is a shared experience because we can feel the 'other' in the timbre. This is partly due to *mimesis*, which is where we experience the output of other bodies empathetically in our own bodies via the action of mirror neurons (Acitores 2011). Body actions are implied through the timbre sound objects and we then internally mimic or respond to these in our own bodies when we listen to music.

There are other reasons timbral perception in psytrance can be seen as a social experience. When we hear sound objects in music we identify them as being 'ours', as a consequence of identifying with the community and culture associated with that music (Wallmark 2014). The sonic space itself and the way it is experienced through dancing, may also have this social element. For example, in a study by Isabelle Viaud-Delmon et al, the authors conducted an experiment involving real-time interactivity with sound (2011). They put markers on a dancer's body and tracked their movements with motion tracking technology; pre-recorded sounds were modified in real time depending on the movements of the dancer. The parameters of the sounds were transformed very precisely for example timbre and intensity, but also the spatial qualities. The dancer found that the feedback changed her relationship with the space, she had heightened awareness of her body and the impression that her body space was extended. Further, she felt through the process used in the study the surrounding performance area and the sonic space projected it became a persona within the performance (Viaud-Delmon et al. 2011).

To conclude this section I will come back to psychoactive substances and how they enhance the social experience of psytrance music. I have mentioned several times in this chapter about how MDMA and LSD create empathogenic and pro-social effects increasing feelings of well-being, positivity, euphoria, empathy and the desire to be open with and trust other people. LSD has also been shown to enhance emotional response to music including feelings of tenderness (Kaelen et al. 2016).

Whilst at higher doses people using ketamine enter the *K-hole*, feel completely detached from their normal reality and therefore find it difficult to socialize, at lower doses users can socialize, while at the same time experiencing hallucinations, giggling and sensations of

“melting into the surroundings” (De Luca et al. 2012: 771). Feelings of dissociation and disembodiment that are common to all these substances may have a counterintuitive effect, in that they may enhance the feeling of a projected, virtual body, situating the listener/dancer firmly in the imagined space of the music, focussing and immersing them in the sonic ecology where the social meanings in the music can be fully experienced and understood. So, through all these means, many of the psychoactive substances found in the psytrance scene would enhance the perception of the timbral face, the experience of sound objects as anthropomorphic and the effect of the ‘multitude in the music’ that these elements create.

2.4 Conclusions

In an evolutionary sense, music allows us to vicariously experience primal scenarios of evading predators or hunting prey, risk and enjoyment and experiences like our formative childhood experience of learning human behaviour, interaction and communication before we developed language. The sound objects in the psytrance ecology work together to create a similar primitive narrative, a sonic rhetoric to which we ascribe meaning through a hierarchy of metaphors. There is a chiasm, a crossing over of the real and virtual via an avatar or virtual body, which is mapped to the dancer’s body image and utilises their body schema. The lessons learned through playful, pre-noetic interactions between virtual body and sound objects in the imagined musical space are brought back to and integrated with the real (Duerden 2007: 80). In other words, we participate in music and learn from it, reflecting on these basic interactions and being updated in a process of becoming. This process is exemplified in psytrance music, which is largely desubjectified, and intensified by the combined effects of the dance floor, with its coloured lasers lighting, visionary artwork, visceral bass, communal experience and psychedelic technologies. We respond to the psytrance experience and are augmented and enhanced, be that in a spiritual and profound or way or just by shaking off the negative effects of the real world and opening up our capacity for joy and playfulness. When there are many of us with cultural backgrounds, experiences and tastes in common, we may find a particular style of music aids us better in our process of becoming. As stated before, many characteristic psytrance sounds are noisy in timbre, which reminds us of bodily exertion. In psytrance then, driving bass, body noise and grotesque humour may symbolise the body in extremis and the body engaging in risky behaviours. These qualities are prominent in British psytrance: I will discuss the significance of this in chapter 4.

Chapter 3: Onset

Zone, Trance, Groove and Flow

3.0 Introduction

Psytrance is named after trancing and, while entering a trance state may not be the end goal for everyone who frequents psytrance parties, it is an important part of its culture. Trance can be described in a number of ways and trying to find a definition that accounts for all of them can result in a description that is vague. For the purposes of this thesis, I describe trance as an altered state of consciousness brought about through participating in a ritual, or other induction process, which overwhelms a person's normal sense of self and diminishes their experience of normal reality so that they feel transported elsewhere. In some circumstances the trancer also feels that the self has temporarily been replaced by a spirit or trance consciousness, in either a literal or figurative sense. There are different kinds of trance which vary in degrees of intensity and though they share traits, their characteristics are culturally determined - their practice is learned by people embedded in a particular culture. As Richard Jankowsky notes, there is a spectrum of approach to trance in ethnomusicology, anthropology and other disciplines, ranging from scholars looking at individual spirit possession rituals and trying not to essentialise across cultures and others who take a broader, cross cultural perspective and look for commonalities in people's experiences (2007). In chapter 1 I laid out my reasons for taking a cross cultural perspective on ritual and trance and some of the advantages and problems inherent in that approach, so here I will just summarize how scholars taking this broader view have described the phenomenon.

Gilbert Rouget's influential work *Music and Trance: A Theory of the Relations Between Music and Possession* (1985) is a broad survey bringing together ethnographic studies of many trance rituals from cultures around the world and throughout history and analysis of the music and performances associated with them. From these he draws out a typology of trance which allows him to take a comparative overview of his data, but resists constructing a unifying theory. He concludes that some trances are associated with music and others not and finds no causal relationship between particular kinds of music and trance, asserting that any kind of music can be associated with trance if the cultural conditions and expectations support it (Rouget 1985: 175).

Judith Becker (2004) bases her definition of trance in neuroscience, concluding that it is a strong emotional experience brought about mainly through rhythmic entrainment. Though she draws heavily from Rouget's work and agrees with his assertion that the characteristics of trance states from different cultures are determined by that setting and not the type of music that accompanies the ritual, she does make some statements about the universality of trance experiences cross culturally by arguing that when we listen to any kind of music with deep focus and engagement, we respond in ways that have very similar characteristics to trance states. She also argues for trance as a dynamic process - *trancing*, after Christopher Small's concept *musicking* - rather than a discrete, static state of mind (Becker 2004).

Deborah Kapchan's work *Traveling Spirit Masters: Moroccan Gnawa Trance and Music in the Global Marketplace* (2007) follows an 'opening out' model which is rooted in her ethnographic inquiry of Gnawa trance rituals but draws comparisons with a broad range of musics from the improvisational jazz of African American figures to Breton folk and examines how people construct identity through trancing. Like Becker, she finds resemblances in the trance experiences of people in the disparate cultures she examines. In *Trance Forms: A Theory of Performed States of Consciousness*, Ronaldo Morelos looks at the performativity of trance, focussing on theatre and dramatic performance. Like Becker, he grounds his work in scientific literature on trance, but widens his definition of trance well beyond the dramatic arts to include people's response to and discourse around 9-11 and the induction process involved in training to be a soldier (Morelos 2009).

In my participant observation and general non-academic immersion in the psytrance scene I have, like the authors above, noted that trance is described differently and means different things to different people; for instance, people favour certain styles of psytrance for inducing the trance state and find others not as effective. It stands to reason that, just like other aspect of the scene, trance differs from location to location and from individual to individual, contingent on things like their embodiment, memories and cultural background and is therefore one of the aspects that can be explored when considering how local scenes come to have their own style. Participants in my study used several different words to describe what I think is a similar altered state of consciousness. I researched the background and meanings of these words and began to wonder whether different trance states might be facilitated by different styles of music and whether different psychoactive substances complement a particular style of trance. I questioned whether these factors, among others, might be connected to local psytrance style. In this chapter I suggest that the three descriptive words from my data correlate with different types and intensities of trance, with

the word 'trance' being more strongly associated with spirituality, groove with the body and 'flow' or 'the zone' being more associated with a psychological state.

I noticed that participants in my research study often expressed a sort of mind/body dualism: people associated some elements in psytrance music with the mind and some with the body and this was often accompanied by an opinion about the relative psychedelicalness of these mind or body associated elements¹⁰. Typically the pulse was associated with the feet and the bass with the body, whilst the upper harmonies and leads were associated with the hands and the head, in terms of gesture, for example, when dancing. The extent to which mind or body associated elements were perceived as psychedelic seemed connected to the style of psytrance favoured, the sort of psychoactive substances taken, clothing aesthetic and to whether the person had a spiritual outlook. There was also a difference in how participants spoke about trance dancing: some people explicitly referred to 'trancing' or 'trance dancing' whereas others described their dance-floor experience using words like 'groove' (for example, 'getting into/finding the groove of the music'), 'flow state' or 'the zone'. Flow is a term from the field of positive psychology, which describes a state of being where one is performing an activity and enters in to a kind of mild trance state. The key to achieving this state of mind is maintaining a balance between the difficulty level of the action and the skill (Csikszentmihalyi 1988): too easy and the mind will wander but too difficult and the mind becomes frustrated. The key is to have just enough ease to 'get into the flow' whilst maintaining some interest via having just enough of a sense of challenge or difficulty. Trance however, while similar in meaning, has a host of additional connotations stemming from the word's spiritual and ritual origins.

So what do we mean when we talk about 'trance' as opposed to 'flow' or 'groove' in the context of music and dancing? What is the significance of this mind/body distinction that is being made by participants in my study and what do the words they use reveal about their embodied experience of psytrance? Could different styles of psytrance induce different altered states and if so, what kind of trance state might accompany 'the London sound' as opposed to styles popular in Bristol, for example? The next sections attempt to explain how the characteristics of trance, flow and groove are reflected in the music, how they are created by music producers and how they are experienced by bodies on the dance-floor. The chapter is guided by the words of my study participants and observations from analysis of psytrance tracks that I undertook as part of my research and concludes with some

¹⁰ See Chapter 1 for an explanation of this concept citing Guerra Lisi, S. and G. Stefani (2008). *A bodily semiotics of music in the globality of languages*. Music, Senses, Body, Rome: International Semiotics Institute.

remarks on what I think the presence of trance characteristics in local psytrance styles tell us about differences between local scenes.

3.1 Music, Movement and Mind

The key elements for a dance-floor trance state to occur are the music, particularly the pulse and rhythmic elements, preparation of one's mind (including the ingestion of psychoactive substances) and repetitive or cyclical movement of the body. The concepts of trance, flow and groove are all bound up with pulse, rhythmic entrainment and the motion of the human body in relation to its own parts and other bodies so it is important for the reader to have some background on these from existing literature before I explain how they relate to psytrance styles.

In his work on gesture and sound, Leon Van Noorden identifies two paths of studying movement's link to music: evolutionary, or functional, and biokinetic (2010). The evolutionary perspective looks at the development of dance and music, attempting to understand why humans would perform activities involving music and movement and how this developed, looking particularly at the group and social aspects of this. In this view, humans are social agents who survive by working together in groups. We can work together in large groups greater than the family unit but we need a 'signalling system' that gives us information on how cohesive and strong our group is in order to avoid conflict in the group. In this view, music and dance performed this function over a long period of time and evolution. This function is called Coalition Quality Signalling or CQS (Van Noorden 2010: 154-55). CQS theory implies that over time people made music and dance central to their social life and taught young children their practices from a very young age. 'Good' performances tell other individuals and groups how well the performing group can work together and be successful in accomplishing a task by demonstrating creativity and that they put in time and effort into making it good for example, practising so that it is synchronized (ibid 2010: 156).

Van Noorden's biokinetic perspective turns inward, in contrast to CQS, to look at the role of the body and perception in music's relation to movement. One of the key things that compels us to dance to music is sensory-motor coupling and rhythmic entrainment and in the previous chapter I discussed some of the processes involved with this. Gibet states that she has learned through modelling gestures that the human body in motion can be described as a "multi-layered architecture" involving the nervous system and biomechanical system (Gibet 2010: 232). The kinematics and dynamics of dancing and entrainment are very important to this chapter. Van Noorden describes the bio-kinetics of movement, which is a field in which

the body is described with the laws of kinetics i.e. the relationship between the forces that act on the body and its velocity and position in space over time. There are several kinds of forces: gravity; reaction forces where extremities meet (for example, feet on the floor); linear and rotational inertial forces and muscle forces (Van Noorden 2010: 157). He explains how these interact to produce what he calls 'quasi-static movement' and 'ballistic movement'. Equilibrium is where the body is in equilibrium with its environment (more or less): this is its normal or default state. From there, if muscle movements are small then the body moves slowly and is stable - inertial and restoring forces act in equilibrium and when the muscles stop moving the body stops: this is called quasi-static movement (Van Noorden 2010: 157).

Ballistic movement happens when there is a sudden, sharp movement of the muscles. Inertial forces increase and the body will only stop moving when the forces are in equilibrium again and the kinetic energy of the movement has been absorbed, called *damping*. The further the body's movement from the point of equilibrium, the more restoring force is needed to return it there (damping) and the force increases incrementally in relation to that distance. This is like the movement of a pendulum: the body moves around its point of equilibrium in the same manner. If a body repeats the ballistic movements that correspond to the pendulum frequency then the amplitude will be increased to its maximum level. If the ballistic movements repeat too quickly then the body cannot follow them; the pendulum movement then becomes out of step with the ballistic movement and eventually the amplitude will decrease to zero. Maximum amplitude at a certain frequency is what van Noorden calls 'bio kinetic resonance': Hamish MacDougall and Steven Moore (2005) demonstrated this resonance by tracking the movement of participants in their study. They found that everyone has a resonance of around 2Hz, no matter the person's size, due to a combination of their walking frequency (2 steps per second or 120 per minute) and the constant force of gravity. Harmony between music and movement depends on a combination of Bio Kinetic Resonance (BKR) and CQS: the BKR of an individual person's locomotion plus the aggregation of all the cooperative locomotive behaviour of a group of people allows them to attain goals that they would not achieve on their own (Van Noorden 2010: 174).

As Godøy explains, basically anything that moves in music or a soundscape could afford a gestural response, whether it is the onset in the form of the beginning tone or a pulse or a succession of pulses, accents which give the feel of energetic, jerky gestures, dynamic contours which give an amplitude envelope to gestures, cyclical patterns that suggest recurring bodily gestures or changes to timbre, tessitura and ornaments that bring to mind instruments and the movements associated with playing them. We 'chunk' continuous

sounds and gestures into meaningful units - although we are still not exactly sure how - and there is growing evidence that imitative behaviour in our minds (the perception-action cycle) is integral to how we experience music. Research in this area suggests that we create a stream of simulated actions in our mind in response to the music which allows us to experience and comprehend it (Godøy 2010: 114-15). Gesture is so important to our experience of music that we could consider pieces of music to be “rich, multi-dimensional scripts” (ibid 2010: 122), a description that would explain how musical emotion and aesthetic sensation is communicated. From this perspective it could be said that the dance-floor experience essentially decodes the musical scripts from psytrance through the filter of the dancer’s experiences, memories, embodiment and cultural background. The ‘code’ or script is also mediated by space and place as I will discuss in chapter 5.

Van Noorden and Dirk Moelants coined the term *effective resonance*, which is defined as the sum total of the *perceptual resonator*, the human mind and ears, and the input movement signal from the music. Gesture is a movement of varying duration that the subject experiences or interprets as a unit of action. You have basic gestures and also expressive gestures, where intensity, emotions or references to other things in real life are added to the basic movement unit (Van Noorden and Moelants 1999). Through resonance people can receive musical and visual information and find potential sources of entrainment which they can translate into movements via isomorphism (Van Noorden 2010: 177). As discussed in the previous chapter, language depends on expressive movement such as gesture. McNeill et al demonstrated that imagery and language are intertwined, and also the alignment between vocal expression and gesture, by showing that hand movements and facial expressions whilst story-telling are not random but integral to a person’s communication. They suggest that a person’s gestures embody the mental imagery associated with language. Gestures take place inside the *kinesphere*: this is a mental construct of the space around your body that bounds your maximum range of movement from a point in space (Laban 1948/1963, Jensenius et al. 2010).

Kapchan, in her work on Moroccan Gnawa trance, described trance as a state of profound abstraction or absorption which has a vocabulary consisting of gesture and is therefore pre-linguistic (Kapchan 2007: 186).¹¹ There are many different types and intensities of altered states of mind across many cultures, as Rouget expounds upon in his work *Music and Trance: A Theory of the Relations between Music and Possession* (Rouget 1985). Becker, in

¹¹ Refer to chapter 2 for the discussion about gesture being pre-linguistic, from the perspective of Merleau-Ponty.

her work *Deep Listeners: Music, Emotion, and Trancing*, draws on Rouget's book and Ludwig Wittgenstein (1953/2010) in asserting that trance is an umbrella term for a set of categories. In other words, what we call 'trance' encapsulates a spectrum of states of mind with a family resemblance - that is, with some similar aspects that are shared and some aspects which do not overlap with those in other styles. Morelos, in *Trance Forms*, argues that trance states are loaded with themes (for example, mythical or other-worldly) depending on the local values and requirements of people from the culture in which the trance style arises (Morelos 2009: 14).

In her article 'Reconsidering Music and Trance: Cross-cultural Differences and Cross-Disciplinary Perspectives', Herbert defines trance "as a process of diminished orientation to consensual reality" and notes that there are different intensities of trance (Herbert 2011: 296). High arousal trance is called *ergotropic* or strong trance and this would include the deep, dissociative possession trance, ecstatic or shamanic trance of many non-Western cultures. Low arousal trances are called *trophotropic* and can include hypnotism, playing a musical instrument, sleepwalking and listening to music. Herbert uses Becker's term *trancing*, denoting it as a process, which allows for the inclusion of different types of trancing situated in different places in scholarly discourse (ibid 2011: 297).

Becker asserts that trance is a sacred state or event involving strong emotion, intense focus, loss of sense of self, amnesia and silencing of the inner monologue. Trancing also causes autonomic nervous system (ANS) arousal. Some cultures believe that people who trance have access to kinds of knowledge and experience that are not accessible in non-trance states and which are indescribable or ineffable: it transcends the material world to access the realm of concepts, ideas, intuition and spirituality. (Becker 2004). In some cultures the concept of trance is widened to include healing practices and theatre practices. It can also be seen as a mode of embodiment, as much as a state of consciousness (Morelos 2009: 22). Becker argues that focussed music listening stops the inner monologue or language, in a similar way to trance. She sees deep listening as parallel to trancing as both have processes that are physical, psychological, somatic and cognitive. Trancers turn on strong emotions at will because they have partial control over the physiology of arousal via the ANS.

As Becker explains, in Merleau-Ponty's terms, trancers "offer themselves to actions from the outside" (Becker 2004: 68), however, they are not 'out of control' because trancing is a skill. Trancing is inextricably tied to its local cultural setting and history because a person's society teaches them the process of trancing and in fact, marked differences in societies that

engage in trancing mean that what is sacred in one culture may be profane in the next (ibid 2004). Morelos agrees trancing is interactive, firstly in the sense that there may be someone performing a trance and somebody witnessing it and secondly because trancing communicates the prevailing aesthetic and symbolism of the surrounding culture. Trancing is therefore a collaborative, participatory process. People are inducted into trance; the perceptual and experiential framework of the trancer are temporarily disrupted. As well as disrupting normal experience, trance can also reinforce normativity because it is based on the conventions and expectations of the culture that it emerges from (Morelos 2009: 14).

Morelos groups together some of the commonalities between different forms of trance. According to Morelos, the induction process involves several elements: identification, involvement, isolation, instruction, initiation, invocation and imagination. The central element in trancing is identification: the self is identified, disrupted and then reassembled within new realities or structures of identity thrown up by the trance state (Morelos 2009: 16-18). In the instruction phase, the trancer learns information about trance induction and the necessary techniques, which makes them more receptive to it. Through this process the trancer gets a sense of being initiated into a closed belief system or group. The initiation can be a ceremonial rite or just a sense of belonging, and equips the person for engaging in the trance state. The trancer is usually isolated from their usual environment, either physically or mentally allowing for intense focus on and involvement with the trance. The imagination then must be activated so that the person can focus on a feeling or image that brings on the appropriate state of consciousness for the trance. The invocation then takes place - the mental trigger for the inner processes that suspend the normal sense of self, so it can then be replaced with the state of consciousness that has been learned about during the induction (Morelos 2009: 16-18).

Trance involves the 'suspension of disbelief', or in other words, the suspension of our normal belief systems. These elements of trance act in a closed system which, as Morelos posits, cycles round and is maintained, so that a new reality is experienced. This temporary reality intensifies or dissipates depending on the momentum of the closed-system cycle and if the trancer does not have enough momentum to maintain the cycle they will fall out of the new reality - and out of the trance (Morelos 2009: 18). Trance is also a kind of social drama, which is both acted and enacted. Morelos looks at trance from a performance theory approach and in those terms it is self-expressive, collaborative and representational (ibid 2009: 147). From a performance theory perspective, the trance performance environment constitutes both a place and an event. Morelos notes that to some extent, the trance experience or flow state integrates a person's sensory experience with their mental

processes (ibid 2009: 273). The psychedelic trance is an embodied experience, not just a mental one, not least because of the effects of psychoactive substances on sensations in the body. Psychoactives - particularly LSD - are known to integrate sensory experience in a kind of synaesthesia from which creative thought emerges, so the psytrance experience can be thought of as a kind of trance state in that sense.

Sound combinations heard over the passage of time is what creates the shapes and gestures we perceive in music. The philosopher Husserl (1893/1991) asked how we are able to constantly maintain the perception of three dimensions when viewing objects within our visual field and talked about this using sound as an example. In a description of the sound of a coach approaching, he noted that whilst apprehending the sound he was also conscious of the passing of time and how his experience of 'the now' was shaped by the memory of the preceding 'nows' and the expectation of further 'nows', indicating that consciousness is not static, but a process of experiencing (ibid 1893/1991: 289-90). This led him to postulate a tripartite model of consciousness, where one's experience comprises of primal impressions, the evanescent sensory experience from moment to moment, retentions, the remnants of recent primal impressions carried into the present and experienced as past, and *protentions*, the expectation of imminent sensory input (Husserl 1893/1991: 289-90). Eugene Montague (2011) develops this to talk about gesture in music performance. As mentioned above, we chunk continuous sounds and gestures into meaningful units. We perceive aural or visual information one chunk at a time but also on a continuum made up of the recent past and anticipated future and so in this sense it is the temporal elements of consciousness that allow us to perceive 3D objects. This same mechanism means that we can conceptualise sounds or melodies as objects (ibid 2011: 33).

According to van Noorden, pulse is our awareness of the bio-kinetic resonance of our body. When dancing, people entrain with the pulse, executing movements that align with the pulse or other chunks in the sound stream (Van Noorden 2010: 162). In their discussion on gestures and performance, Dahl et al talk about the hypothesis that a tendency in human to spontaneously entrain physical movement may be what leads to the emergence of musical meter (Clayton 2007, Dahl et al. 2010: 59-60). Movement does not have to happen for entrainment with the pulse to take place, but it may make synchronizing with the external stimulant easier, less demanding of attention and maybe more economic in terms of freeing the mind to take care of other tasks (ibid 2010: 59-60).

Different tempos can convey different bodily states and emotions: for instance, slow pieces/tempos usually imply sadness whilst fast tempos are typically associated with

happiness or joy. A change in rhythmic structure can lend a different character to the pulse and its tempo. Repp demonstrated that this can incite a different response in body movements through a study that found participants, when tapping along to music at a constant tempo, changed the time taken between taps depending on the rhythmic structure of the music (Repp 2006). A sense of embodied attitude or comportment can also be conveyed through rhythmic structures: for example, Gustav Becking compared the music of Ludwig van Beethoven and Gustav Mahler and found that although they were similar in style and tempo, Beethoven's beats suggested a 'stride' whilst Mahler's seemed to 'hover' (Becking 1928/2011, Van Noorden 2010).

To summarize, music and dancing are an important aspect of trance induction in many cultures and have evolved because they perform a key function in group cohesion for human beings. Trance is an embodied experience and we can explain it from that perspective but like music and dancing it evolved as a social phenomenon and also has a significant role to play in group cohesion. Gesture is integral to dancing and also to our experience of music: tempo, rhythmic structure, sounds and melodies can convey moods, bodily comportment and gestures. A person's gestures embody the mental imagery associated with language, so it could be said that dancers decode the musical scripts from music through the filter of their experiences, memories, embodiment and cultural background.

3.2 Trancing

In his work *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure*, anthropologist Victor Turner explores the rites of the Ndembu of Zambia. He draws from the work of van Gennep (1909/1960) on the liminal: the transitional, in-between-worlds state which occurs during ritual processes. He also develops the concept of *communitas*: a state of interconnection and unity that arises through ritual - a state free from the constraints of normative societal structures (1969/2017: 94-130). He broadened the definition of these two concepts, finding analogues outside ritual practices like the Ndembu's and using them to interrogate structures and processes in wider society, an approach many scholars have continued - indeed his influence can be seen in the work of the anthropologists I cite in this section on trancing. Later in this thesis I discuss whether it is appropriate for a ritual based paradigm like this to be applied to psytrance. My perception is that some psytrance scenes lean towards a more spiritual focus in their musical and extra-musical characteristics, whereas other scenes have a more secular feel, such as the British scene. Maryam's reference to "sunny" hippie types of people and lifestyles at international festivals versus dirty and fiery atmospheres in the UK, which I cited at the end of the previous chapter, also speaks to this difference in outlook.

Another good example of this difference is the centrality of the sacred in the Boom festival in Portugal, most obvious in its Liminal Village and dance Temple, compared to festivals like Cosmo or Noisily in the UK. De Ledesma states something similar in his study of a British psytrance festival, questioning the use Victor Turner's anthropological theories when talking about the British psytrance scene (2011). I will discuss this in more detail when I return to the British scene in chapter 4.

Psytrance producers who participated in my research study were asked to describe the psychedelic elements in their music. Many of the responses were similar to the statements of the scholars I cited in the above section, particularly some of the more clinical sounding lists of behaviours observed in those participating in or enacting different kinds of trance and also with respect to how they draw comparisons with other trance cultures from around the world. The producers made reference to the use of 'non-Western' and 'exotic' scales and drones similar to those found in classical Indian music and used words like 'shamanic' and 'tribal' when describing their music and the effect on the listener or dancer, which speaks to a view of traditional music as a symbol for returning to a spirituality that has been lost through the development of the modern world. To illustrate, a survey participant described the psychedelicalness in their music as: "Something beyond words and the normal constructs of 'music'. Something more shamanic and true to the source. The first principles of existence and consciousness." There were many references to 'journeying' in the sense of a kind of ritualised journey into another spiritual plane. Kapchan writes about this in her work on Moroccan Gnawa trance, noting how Western 'world music' producers and dance music cultures group together trance rituals from many 'other' cultures and appropriate elements of them to create a sense of a universal sacred (2007: 129, 234).

One survey participant noted that "the feeling you have by dancing and sharing your experience with other people while you're dancing on the dance-floor is something truly unique", reflecting the notion of trance as a performed social drama that unites groups of human beings who participate in it. Another felt that "context is everything, and so much is entirely dependent on the listener's perception of what they find psychedelic - or perhaps more what they expect to find psychedelic", which underscores how trancing is both a learned practice and is contingent on local cultures and the experiences and expectations of the trancer.

Participants in my study also answered a question about the perfect conditions for creativity when composing their psychedelic music. These responses also reflected many of the behaviours and common traits noted in scholars on trance states. For example, participants often used words relating to or directly referred to flow state, or in the case of this participant,

momentum: “Momentum - productivity and creativity breed same, while stagnation makes it harder to get back into a creative mode. Also a state of mind turned inward.” This statement reminds me of the process of trance induction that Morelos describes, where all of the required behaviours must be maintained in an active cycle; where momentum leads to the persistence of the trance state and loss of momentum would eventually result in the person falling out of the trance (Morelos 2009: 18). As I will discuss in a later section of this chapter flow state in an activity provides, or is even synonymous with, an ideal creative mind-set and is a form of trance, albeit at the other end of the spectrum of intensity of bona fide possession trance.

Music producers who took part in my study stated that they separated or isolated themselves either physically or mentally in order to prepare for the creative process. There is evidence of some ritual or ceremonial style process in the preparation of some producers, such as being in a “serious mood”, “being in the right spirit”, having a clear or peaceful mind and references to using exercise and meditation to create a clear mental boundary between normal day to day life and the desired state of mind for creativity. Some stated that they isolated themselves by producing music either first thing in the morning or late at night: as one participant said “late at night when the world's quiet is good for music” and another “I'm the most creative when I'm in very emotional state”. Another recounted how they are “...typically most creative late at night when my thoughts become looser and I can channel the feelings and emotions of the things I feel the need to express.” The reference in this statement to channelling feelings and emotions and having a need to express them could be seen as a metaphor for a kind of possession, where the person is possessed not by a spirit but by affect, creativity and music and gives up their ordinary sense of self to be guided by them into an altered states of consciousness. Rouget calls trancing alone ‘ecstatic’ and uses a different term because this style of trance is introspective and about sensory deprivation, immobility and recollection, lacking the social aspect of trance proper - noise, sensory overload, other people, amnesia and movement (Rouget 1985: 41).

I interviewed Maryam, a dancer¹² who has attended London squat parties and festivals at home and abroad. She used the term “trance-floor” even when talking about London squat parties in industrial settings - indeed she takes her yoga mat and does a warm up to get in the appropriate “headspace” before dancing, even at the most “gritty and dirty” London squat

¹² As explained in chapter 1, I began by focussing on music production in my study, but eventually began to interrogate beyond this in order to obtain as complete a view of the UK psytrance scene as I could. I interviewed an artist, an agent and promoter and two scene participants, one of whom is a dancer, so I switch between these sources throughout the thesis.

parties. This preparation, usually in the less hectic space of the chill-out room, affords a calm, peaceful clarity which she says is necessary before heading to the dance-floor as she wants her body to be loose and to feel completely free like there are “no limitations and I can do anything”. She is able to attain this peace and inward focus even when it is busy and people are treading on her mat as they go by - as a practitioner of yoga and Odissi dance, a Hindu devotional dance form, she is used to tuning out distractions like this.

Coming back to the music production aspect of psytrance, some study participants reported that they use natural substances like Guarana or herbal teas to enable them to remain focussed for long periods of time. Many others reported using psychoactive substances, of which THC (cannabis) featured most often followed by amphetamines. Participants explained that THC would spark creativity and help with relaxation as well as providing some of the psychedelic effects that listeners/dancers will experience when they listen to the music but without as strong an effect as other psychoactive substances, such as those that create visual distortions, thus giving them the ability to compose effectively. Amphetamines were reported to accelerate the mind and provide continuity in participants' immersion in the creative zone, enabling them to stay there for extended periods of time. Similarly to cannabis, they also provide stimulation without significant psychedelic distortions that would impede their ability to interact with technology and remain focussed on the task of composing. Psychoactive substances like LSD, Ketamine and MXE were mentioned by some participants who found they fostered creativity and experimental thinking whilst also putting them in the mind-set of those who will eventually experience the music on the dance-floor.

It is interesting that there were very few mentions of LSD usage, whilst Ketamine and MXE usage was more frequently reported, as LSD has a reputation as the quintessential psychedelic psychoactive substance and Ketamine use is derided by many people in the psytrance scene. The advantage of Ketamine and MXE may lie in the fact that they have a dissociative effect and would therefore be useful for enhancing the isolation/separation aspects of the trance induction cycle. Almost all participants who use substances with stronger psychoactive effects stated that they were taken in small amounts as heavy use would make the composition process difficult. Some use substances at particular stages of the creative process for example this participant stated “Mostly I usually use psychoactive substances afterwards and to 'listen-through' music that I have made...” There seems to be a fine balance required in the use of psychoactives for creating music; one that allows the producer to achieve the separation from everyday reality and access the immersive, liminal

zone created by the trance-like creative state, without becoming intoxicated to the point of inhibiting composition.

Research has been undertaken to look at the effects rhythm and pulse have on trancing. For instance, research conducted by Hove and Stelzer using fMRI to study the brains of people trancing, noted increased connectivity in a part of the brain involved in internally directed thought and two other regions that constitute the core control network. That these three areas were activated suggested that the control network is involved in maintaining an internally directed state over long periods of time when trancing. They also noticed that connectivity decreased in the areas of the brain that process auditory information, suggesting that the repetitive beats which often accompany trancing become predictable, we devote less energy to processing them and our brains gradually reduce attention to them as the trance progresses. Hove and Stelzer suggest that this may help the trancer disengage from their surroundings and maintain the internally directed state (Hove et al. 2016).

Kapchan's work on Moroccan Gnawa possession trance tells how rock and jazz musicians like Jimi Hendrix, Robert Plant and Randy Weston among others have drawn on Moroccan music in various ways, both in terms of musical style and the spirit of the rituals, which they tend to use more as a symbol of liberation than of possession per se (Kapchan 2007: 22-23). There are many idiophonic sounds in Gnawa trance music; the instrumental noises sound like the sound shapes made by participants' chanting. The musicians play with intonation, drawing out vowels and repeating phonemes - in a very similar way to how human voice samples are manipulated in psytrance (Kapchan 2007: 149). As mentioned above, temporal acceleration is important in Gnawa trance, where the participant's body movements are entrained with the tempo of the drummer, who gradually increases the rate of drumming, driving the person to a frenzied state where they fall into possession (ibid 2007: 103-104).

Repetitive music and beats may not be pre-requisites for trance states but it is clear is that deep listening, repetitive beats and rhythmic entrainment are a popular means to bring them about and one that is common to many cultures throughout history. Consider for example the ancient Greek cult of Dionysus, who engaged in rituals of drunken excess and ecstatic dancing. A contrasting example are the Master Musicians of Joujouka, Sufi trance musicians whose musical style was passed down for many generations. They gained international exposure through their collaboration with 1960s bands like the Rolling Stones and imparted their musical style (and perhaps in turn their trance style) to Western pop music. There are numerous such examples from many traditions and across many cultures and psychedelic dance music is arguably one of these.

Psytrance uses the sound of traditional instruments from around the globe, sounds that resemble those instruments and ritual-like elements in the music, which reflect a conscientious aim on the part of producers to create trance-inducing music. It focusses on the pulse and rhythm via the bassline, kick drum and percussion that are crucial to its sound, and hearing these in the context of a party or festival where people are entrained to the beat, immersed in trance-dancing, it is easy to find parallels with non-Western traditional trance rituals led by drumming. Other elements such as drones combined with harmonic overtones bring to mind instruments like the didgeridoo, jaw harp and Tuvan throat singing - all traditional instruments or techniques which use the resonance of the body's cavities to produce sound and thereby centre on the inward, bodily experience (Lowe, 2011; Pegg; Wright, 2014). As will be discussed more fully in the next chapter on the British scene, psytrance music contains sonic anaphones that reflect the sound of the inner workings of the body. The bassline, kick drum and percussion in psytrance also have a role in maintaining the internally directed state required for trancing, whilst enigmatic, processed sounds in the higher frequency range are experienced as sonic objects in the internal trance-space of the dancer's mind. As discussed in chapter 2, these interact with the body schema, the virtual body in the mind-scape, creating symbolic exchanges which then have levels of meaning attached to them which vary according to the individual's body schema, lived experience, cultural background and so on. These complex, symbolic interactions capture the attention, directing it inwards in a similar way to the bassline and kick drum and therefore also facilitate trancing.

Kapchan's case study involving Breton and Gnawa musicians shows how we can be 'possessed' by culture (Kapchan 2007: 229-31). She asserts that Celtic culture holds a similar place in the Breton mind-set as Berber culture does to Moroccans arguing that Celtic and Berber cultures are linked through a shared struggle against colonising forces, in which their languages and histories were suppressed, leading to an impulse to re-enact them and keep them alive. When they re-enact these cultural traditions they are, according to Kapchan, possessed by the cultural memory of Celtic or Berber traditions; possessed by the 'spirit' of Celtic or Berber culture. She explains the Breton concept of 'intersignes', which can be described as a link between the present, future and past as well as the natural world and a supernatural one. In this line of argument this is a liminal or in-between space where the Celtic or Berber spirits dwell (ibid 2007: 203-04). The elements that comprise the ritual re-enactment, including music, dance, trancing etc. summon a realm created by generations of people, inside which we take part in the ritual with other participants from the past, present and future. This liminal space reminds me of the Becker's notion of the *supra-individual*

domain, where people and cultures are connected across time and space (Becker 2004: 122-23).

A similar idea is posited by Morelos, that trancing allows the expression of a *cultural body*, by which he means a trancer is 'possessed' by a collective sense of identity (Morelos 2009: 103). Morelos conceptualisation of trance is based on the idea of layered consciousness, where people move through a multiplicity of states of consciousness, models of reality and identity (Morelos 2009: 280). He states that we have a collection of personal, regional, ethnic, cultural, linguistic and presumed identities within each of us and can be possessed by any one of them while trancing (Morelos 2009: 280). In my interview with Maryam she stated that everybody has different characters within them that they adopt at parties and festivals and so for example, in order to attain the calm and inward focus she needs when on the yoga mat before dancing, she takes on the character of "that girl who always brings the yoga mat to parties" in order to rid herself of any self-conscious feelings. The possessions that take place in psytrance scenes do not involve a spirit but rather a script or text made up of meaningful gestures, that temporarily possesses the trancer for the period of time in which they have put aside their autobiographical self and given up their executive control to go into a trance state (Morelos 2009: 67). As Becker states, through deep listening and other forms of trancing involving music, we extend our sense of self, extend the bounds of our consciousness and we can 'become' the music (Becker 2004: 139-40).

Kapchan advises against drawing a direct comparison between Gnawa trance and forms of trance like deep listening, and this extends to the trancing on EDM dance-floors, as although they do share similarities trancing is a culturally embedded phenomenon. With this caveat however, we can use traditional trance cultures in a metaphorical way when exploring psytrance or other modern conceptions of trance ritual (Kapchan 2007: 232). Traditional trance cultures and their music are sometimes fetishized and appropriated by Westerners, repackaged as a transcultural amalgam - a kind of universal spirituality. Take for example the way in which Buddhist chanting, Tuvan throat singing and Indian classical musics have been used in Goa trance. As with Kapchan's example of Celtic Breton and Moroccan Gnawa traditions, traditional cultures and the notion of 'sacred' that is derived from them are utilised by Western cultures to reclaim a perceived loss of heritage. This may assuage anxieties over disconnects between contemporary culture and their more ancient or 'primitive' traditions and perhaps also as a way to reconcile with their colonial history. The borrowed

and recontextualised sounds and other cultural signifiers become technics¹³ in the ritual re-enactment of the culture that borrowed them (Kapchan 2007: 234-36). What does this suggest about psytrance culture, which borrows elements from a wide range of traditional cultures?

Psytrance has often been analysed through Maffesoli's neo-tribe concept. Maffesoli, who is influenced by Victor Turner's work, posits that modern society is characterised by neo-tribes, which fall outside the everyday 9am-5pm work routine and societal structures and are based around leisure and enjoyment. Tribal groups have permeable boundaries and overlap each other and people can belong to multiple tribes at one time (Maffesoli 1996). Tribal phraseology is widespread in psytrance scenes and is particularly evident in promotional materials for festivals¹⁴ and in artist names, such as Space Tribe and Vibe Tribe. One could say that trancers in the psytrance scene are possessed by a universal 'tribal spirit' - or more accurately a combination of the global psytrance spirit and the particular tribal spirit of the local culture where a psytrance event is taking place. The British tribal spirit might therefore include Celtic or pagan elements, fairies and other folklore and mythology of the British Isles.

Psytrance culture, in some of its subgenres, makes use of traditional music and in other subgenres alludes to traditional music through anaphones. It also more generally draws upon the aesthetics, philosophies, spiritualities and rituals of tribal cultures, including cultures that engage in trancing. In doing this it creates a transcultural sacred and thereby co-opts heritage and folklore to revive lost tribal cultures and traditions, and reconnect with the natural world as a response to the advance of industrialisation and technology. Rietveld describes high-tempo EDM styles as a response to the information overload of digitally connected modern lives— as an inoculation against this overload (Rietveld 2018:87)

I think in addition to this there exists an impulse to create order in a chaotic world, for instance the act of taming nature, making it temporarily habitable through taking music technology, shelter, food and other party technics into natural locations. In the same way, technology is tamed by being put in the service of spirituality and perhaps also by being used to reproduce sounds and patterns from the natural world. Maryam's description of taking her yoga mat to squat parties in London to warm up before dancing is interesting as

¹³ *Technics* is a concept developed by Mumford from the Greek word *tekhne*. It is a broad concept encompassing technology, art, skill and the interaction between society, culture and technology Mumford, L. (2010). *Technics and civilization*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

¹⁴ See for example the 'vision' section on the website for Boom Festival 2018: "Through dance and music, we can reconnect to our own individual divine essence, while in synch with the beating heart of the whole tribe." <https://www.boomfestival.org/boom2018/vision/boom-vision/>. Accessed 25.06.18.

she is taking something spiritual to an industrial environment and is not afraid to do this even though there will be people present who do not espouse a spiritual or religious outlook. I think this sense of taking the ineffable transcendent experiences to gritty, dirty and debased places is an important characteristic of psytrance and will explore this more in the next two chapters.

The fact that psytrance is a phenomenon mainly of Western 'developed' nations also indicates that it represents in part a coming to terms with these nations' history and place in the world in a postcolonial era. Despite the issue of cultural appropriation, Kapchan is of the opinion that there is value in non-traditional forms of trance music that draw on a transcultural sacred because the end result is that "diverse communities centred on affect" are created which benefit the wellbeing of participants in those communities (2007: 238). As Attali notes "music is a way of perceiving the world" and, extending this also to trance dancing, I would say not only a way of perceiving the world but also a way of understanding it and exploring our identity in relation to it: dancing through our milieu (1985: 4, cited in Kapchan 2007: 237).

Here I return to the reports of participants in my study on their experience of psytrance and trancing. Study participants highlighting particularly psychedelic musical elements frequently used words like 'hypnotic' and 'repetition' in their responses¹⁵. There were many assertions that rhythms and basslines facilitate trance, for instance a participant described the way they "guide me to a higher state of consciousness" and another said that they were "helpful to induce trance-like mental states". The trance stimulating qualities were reported as "intricate percussion", "pumping" and "driving" basslines and there were several descriptions of rhythms and basslines as forceful agents which propel the listener/dancer into a trance-like state such as a "gradual build-up of energy and release into climax", "slowly building towards something...[or] when the music culminates to a crazy frenzy", a "vibration, that is specifically designed to interface with and accelerate the mind" and "the feeling of journeying quickly, moving too fast to hang onto anything". These statements are reminiscent of Kapchan's ethnographic research on Gnawa rituals where she describes the close relationship between the musicians and trance dancers: the dancer follows the pulse as it intensifies and the tempo quickens, driving the person to a point where they collapse in full spirit possession (2007: 103-04).

¹⁵ The psytrance producers I spoke to are also people who attend parties and have had psychedelic altered experiences, so often they describe embodied experience from the dance floor in the same breath as descriptions of their music or their experience as a psytrance artist.

There was a correlation between the words participants used to describe their dance-floor experience and the approach to the scene that was apparent in the other language they used in their responses. People who referred to 'trancing', 'trance dancing' and feeling 'uplifted' also tended to use language that seems to reflect a more spiritual approach to psytrance as well as a strong allegiance to the scene. People who described their dance-floor experience using words like 'groove' (for example, 'getting into/finding the groove of the music'), 'flow state' or 'the zone', tended not to use language reflecting a spiritual approach to psytrance and in some instances they mentioned scenes based around other genres of EDM, suggesting that psytrance was not the only scene in which they participate. I asked producer Chris if when writing music he aimed to recreate the experience of tripping or whether just to complement such an experience and he made some interesting observations about trancing:

...from my perspective it's to complement that. It was designing music to be listened to, dancing hopefully in a nice field in the middle of the English countryside with a bloody great big oak tree in the middle of it. Under the influence of LSD...in the context of probably dancing for eight hours or longer, or twelve hours, so it's definitely a trance state. I hesitate to use the word trance because of the contemporary genre association... The usage of the term has changed, but trance is a ritual state of doing something repetitive for a long time until you get into an altered...mind and body state. That means there are two things going on, you've got the physical, that's why the BPM is really important, and getting the right groove. (See Appendix E for more.)

So here he uses both 'trance' and 'groove', and the hesitancy about using 'trance' is not because of spiritual connotations but the possibility of people associating it with commercial trance - this is perhaps why when he talks about his own music, he uses the term "psychedelic techno". When I conducted my participant observation at parties, I do not recall anyone I spoke to using the word 'trance' or 'trancing' to describe dancefloor experience; people typically referred to it as having a 'wiggle', a 'wobble' or a 'stomp'. It is only in the online questionnaire and interviews that participants referred to 'trance' and 'trancing'. Flyers for psytrance events tend to have artwork with spiritual and religious undertones: designs prominently featuring the face of a gods, goddess or the Buddha are common, hinting at the transcendent experience to be had at the event and usually including a 'third eye', signifying the sacred or special insight.¹⁶

A notable feature in my questionnaire data was that the 'Audio Techniques' parent node was the most mentioned category in the British data, along with 'Qualities or Moods' and

¹⁶ See Appendix A for examples featuring a goddess and the Green Man of British folklore.

'Instrumentation, Voices and Layers'. Among the child nodes, both British and non-British mentioned words that fell into the 'Playfulness and Humour' and 'Experimental and Unpredictable' most often when asked about psychedelic musical traits but a notable difference was that British participants also rated the Bassline and Kick as being very important. My study was too small to render statistically significant and reliable results, but taken alongside my interviewees' comments regarding the valorisation of technical proficiency in sound engineering and the 'grown-up' quality of British producers' music, my interpretation is that British producers seem more concerned with technical and audio aspects of the music when it comes to making psychedelic sounds. In terms of the child nodes the bassline and kick focus in the British data reminds me of the more popular and prevalent style in the UK during the 2000s, the London sound, which typically features heavy and driving basslines - of the sort that may lend themselves to frenzied, ecstatic trance. However, drawing a comparison between British psytrance and Kapchan's description of Gnawa trance ceremonies seems inconsistent with my theory that people in British psytrance culture tend towards thinking of trance in a non-spiritual, non-ceremonial way.

3.3 Flowing, Grooving

Participants in my study made many references to the flow state, both directly (one participant linked to the Wikipedia entry for 'Flow' indicating they had awareness about its provenance in positive psychology) and indirectly: for example when asked about the most psychedelic elements in their music they used descriptions like "sweeping synths", "continuous motion or "moving elements". When asked about the ideal situation for creativity to occur, they talked about being "engaged", "motivated" and the perseverance needed to get into the "zone". This shows the relationship between levels of attention and flow state and Csikszentmihalyi's characteristic of having clear goals (Csikszentmihalyi 1988, Leman 2010: 144). When answering the question about the psychedelic characteristics of their music, one participant said that "the overlay of driving basslines for the body and the complex sounds with different 'phrase' lengths...take your mind to a new level". The statements above speak to the need for complexity and challenge to be balanced with skill and the ability to perform actions 'on auto-pilot' that is a key characteristic of the psychological state of flow (Leman 2010: 144). It is also worth noting the interesting spatial aspect to the concept of 'the zone'. Going through a trance induction process may result in a person feeling they are transported to another plain; 'the zone' seems to describe the same liminal space, but without the connotations of spirituality and ritual attached to trancing.

Other statements from participants conflated spirituality with flow state, for example a participant said of their ideal situation for creativity “I get into a meditative Zen-like state of flow by having some beers and a smoke.” There were more Buddhist connotations in participants’ responses, for instance talking about being “invested in the moment of working on music” and having “no attachment to the end goal of the creation process” as key elements of being in a creative flow state (Leman 2010: 144). Experiencing the moment and not being driven towards an end goal are characteristics of minimalism. Seen alongside statements about psychedelic characteristics in psytrance such as “the unexpected”, “weird samples” and “unpredictability”, it is clear that here again there is a balance between minimal, repetitive elements - process based music - and more complex, experimental and novel elements in the music: the flow state manifests in the creative process of the producers and in the music they produce.

Flow is a state of mind where an individual's faculties are completely preoccupied with or focussed on a task. As Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi outlines, flow states often arise from activities that are risky or difficult, stretch a person's capacity and involve novelty and discovery (1988). Maintaining flow therefore involves balancing challenges and skills (Leman 2010: 139). As Morelos states, flow is generally a term which is linked to improvisation. It is an optimal or peak experience that occurs when people are completely immersed in an activity, performing it in a relaxed and seemingly automatic way, but at the same time their attention is sharply focussed. It can be thought of as analogous to the ‘creative state’ of performance identified by Stanislavsky but occurs across a wide range of activities. The originator of the concept, positive psychology proponent Csikszentmihalyi, identified the characteristics of flow states as: having clear goals in each step of the activity, receiving immediate feedback from your actions, the balance of challenges and skills, the merging of actions and awareness, the ability to block out distractions from your mind, having no self-consciousness or fear of failure, perception of time becoming distorted and the primacy of process i.e. the activity, or indeed the flow state, becomes an end in itself (Csikszentmihalyi and Csikszentmihalyi 1992: 34, Morelos 2009: 44). These characteristics bear a strong resemblance to characteristics of trancing outlined in the first section, so the concepts are clearly similar and related, however the flow state as Csikszentmihalyi describes it gives rise to a sense of satisfaction and well-being rather than the ecstatic feeling of an ergotropic or strong trance state. Kapchan talks about flow in her study of Gnawa trance and asserts that flow is about balancing control and difficulty or loss of control (Kapchan 2007: 58-59). She posits that trances are gestures that create a space for flow, with music is acting as the facilitator in that process (ibid 2007: 60).

Before she started to train in Odissi dance, interview participant Maryam engaged in Poi, a 'flow art' like juggling and hooping and was adept at this but felt in the end it was too limiting; it only used the upper part of her body and very specific, repetitive movements spinning in planes around the body. She wanted the movement to come back into her whole body and found Odissi, which in her words was "next level" and "addictive". I asked her to compare the experience of these three forms of expression, dancing at a party, spinning and Odissi dance. Odissi and spinning both involve pre-choreographed movements and steps, with Poi being more systematic and processed based, requiring focus and Odissi being more expressive, but still with a similar concern for making the correct movements. In contrast on the trance-floor she feels she has "no worries about making mistakes" and that a foot put wrong or a loss of balance is not incorrect but instead an opportunity for creativity and experimentation. However for trancing to occur she states that "the music has to be right and have its own flow".

Maryam says she prefers progressive trance to full-on styles or dark/forest styles as it is slower and there is more space between the beats to add hand gestures and experiment with movement. Van Noorden asserts that for dancers, responding to the pulse element of the music can be very precise and specific to move to, whereas the spatial dimension of the music is less constrained to work within (Van Noorden 2010: 163). The size of body gestures is effected by spatial and dynamic elements in the music, for instance, the louder the music is, the bigger the dancer's gesture tends to be in response. The degree of expressiveness in dancing may also tell us about the dancer's mental state; as Leman notes "the expressiveness of gestural trace may provide an indication of flow" (Leman 2010: 141). Interview participant Chris described the parties he attended reaching a point of 'peak flow': "...You get to certain moments in a good party where the whole dance floor is just sort of carving out space".

Another interesting feature in my data (see Appendix D) was the non-British group of respondents and interviewees rated the category Instrumentation, Voices and Layers higher than all the other parent nodes, followed by Qualities or Moods and Composition Techniques. Within composition techniques, non-British participants mentioned narrative and storytelling - British participants did not. Audio Techniques were more towards the centre of the distribution in the non-British participant data in contrast with British participants who rated Audio Techniques highly. As mentioned in the previous section, among the child nodes, both British and non-British rated Playfulness and Humour and Experimental and Unpredictable as being very psychedelic musical traits. Non-British participants also judged Sound Effects and Rhythm and Percussion to be the most psychedelic. Non-British

participants seemed to favour composition techniques - a node in which I included aspects like overall structure and narrative- and creative instrumentation. As I mentioned before, the British respondents were more focussed on the importance of the bass and kick drum. The non-British data seems more focussed towards upper frequencies and detail, so sound effects and the complexity of rhythm and percussion - the sort of elements that are most likely to carry a melody (as far as there are melodies in psytrance) or give room for a feeling of groove in the percussion. The study I undertook for this thesis was really too small to make generalisations on trends in psytrance preference among non-British countries - over half of the respondents and interviewees were British and the non-British participants were spread across a range of different countries. It will suffice to say that the difference in what is most important psychedelically to non-British participants, aside from the playfulness, humour, experimental and unpredictable qualities that all participants rated highly, serves to highlight what was clearly important to British ones: driving basslines and sharp, skilful audio production.

Participants in my study referred to the groove in several ways. Firstly, there were indirect statements: when asked about psychedelic elements of their music participants talked about the bassline, for example, “funky bass”, and rhythm, specifically polyrhythms and “tribalistic” rhythms. Statements also focussed on percussion, describing it as “intricate” and “interesting”. There were also direct references, for example, in the question about psychedelic features of their music one answered that there should be a “constant groove”, which seems to combine the ideas of body based groove and the continuous repetition others alluded to as a means to induce trancing. When asked about the ideal scenario for creativity when producing a participant said that there were “Not a lot of pre-requisites required” and they aimed to “get a grooving basic-flow from the synth by playing with the knobs”. There were similar statements made about physicality and haptics - particularly in relation to musical instruments. One participant said that one of the most psychedelic aspects of their music as sometimes “a great 303 riff” and one person said of their ideal scenario for creativity that “Past situations that have led to being creative when working. Probably years of studying, practice of instruments or new techniques and jamming has helped the most.” I connect these examples to the concept of groove because of the way groove has been described as a phenomenon of live ensemble music.

Groove is also a phenomenon of dancing and dancing with others. Maryam states that she needs to feel balanced to be creative and begins by listening and starting to “bounce” and “get into the vibe” until the moment arrives when she feels compelled to dance. In terms of the type of music that she feels is most conducive to trance dancing, she likes to hear

interesting rhythms and well placed sounds that make her feel “engaged” and states that “music that is too obvious and contrived is bad”. She prefers progressive trance to full-on, dark or forest styles as it is slower and there is more space between the beats to add hand gestures and experiment with movement. A focus on interesting rhythms and having space in the music to experiment with dance are inherently groovy characteristics.

Repetition is one of the ways that bodily desire is communicated through language - and also in musical language (Kapchan 2007: 103-04). I talked about the concepts of being possessed by a cultural spirit and being possessed by the music itself when trancing. We can also speak of being possessed by rhythm (ibid 2007: 82). You could say that music ‘penetrates’ and invades the body, to use a sexual metaphor¹⁷. Groove has been used colloquially to reference dancing and moving body parts in a sexual way (though this definition has no currency today), see for example ‘Shake Your Groove Thing’, a 1978 song by disco act Peaches & Herb. Groove has been defined in a number of ways in musicology, both in very vague terms and more specifically. Tiger Roholt defines it as the feel of a rhythm guiding your body through the music, like the needle of a record player falling into a groove (Roholt 2007: 37-39). Humans are not automatons, so even when they play or sing together and it sounds strictly in time, they are never precisely in time with each-other and they have to make an effort to adjust to others in order to synchronise with others whilst maintaining entrainment with the beat. Research has discovered that playing just ahead or behind others is more comfortable and natural to musicians. We can also decide to play in time with others or not: groove typically involves playing slightly faster or slower than the pulse so that certain beats in a rhythm fall behind or in front of where the pulse tells you they should be, confounding your expectations (Dahl et al. 2010: 59-60).

Phenomenologically, the slight deviations in timing, pushing forward (early placement of rhythm) and leaning back (late placement) trigger Gestalt images of a body doing the same, giving a ‘laid back’ feel. The musician will play to the effect they want and then have to quickly recalculate through movement to stay roughly in time with the pulse. This process goes back and forth ‘on autopilot’ and puts the musicians ‘in the zone’, affording a satisfying flow state, in which they can play and improvise without thinking about it. This nuanced swing may not be decoded in the desired way by all listeners. Focusing on a feature in fact can lead to taking it out of its context where it is related and compared to other musical features-it is this which gives it its perceived effect, so that the listener does not receive the

¹⁷ Kapchan also compares trance to an epiphany (in the Christian sense), a bodily experience which “manifests the invisible” and is shared with others, providing a view of trance as sensual and embodied but with a religious slant (Kapchan 2007 p. 68).

encoded gestalt of 'laid-backness'. As Roholt says, perceiving is active, so a change of body position or focus in our attention can change what we perceive and make the meaning of what we perceive become more nuanced. Using Merleau-Ponty's term, he explains that groove is *dispositional* in that the intended laid-backness is only perceived if the required shift in perception occurs in the perceiver. A person has to look indirectly to feel the sense of confoundedness that ensues from the ambiguity and understand whole picture (Roholt 2007: 41-44, 164).confoundedness that ensues from the ambiguity and understand whole picture (Roholt 2007: 41-44, 164).

What is groovy about psytrance? It is often accused of being too motorik or machine-like and lacking the groove of live music. As Rietveld describes, drone-like basslines in earlier Goa trance have a more "funky" feel than the "techno minimalism" of later psytrance (2010: 71). However, psytrance producers do put groove in their music by playing an instrument over the track when playing live or in the studio and techniques through plug-ins or features of software they use (such as an automated swing feature in a sequencer) or by feel - manually changing lengths of some notes or altering their amplitude or attack slightly. Even if certain styles of psytrance lack a sense of groove in the music, groove can still happen in response in the listening or dancing body, for example if the music is very fast a stamping or marching groove might occur in the body, whereas if it is slow enough so that the body can catch up with the beat, there is more room for hip movement and embellishment creating a central groove - as is exemplified in Maryam's comments above.

If the bassline is very precisely on the beat, for instance if notes have been quantized and the music is fast paced, the dancer may feel propelled forward, while if it is behind to beat slightly they may feel more relaxed and laid-back. The body compares the feature causing the groove with the whole, indirectly, causing ambiguity and confoundedness, which provide a challenge while at the same time the pulse is emphasised in relation to the rhythm allowing for repeated autopilot movements and assists in focussing the attention inwards - these are both key elements of the flow state.

The gapping or disconnect between the groove element and the whole piece or between 'automated' movement and challenging movement causes the sense of being confounded that I believe is central to psychedelicalness in music and psychedelia in general.

Psychedelicalness has a lot to do with the gap between extremes, for instance thinking about nonsense in 1960s psychedelic rock, where words and concepts are juxtaposed incongruously. Each word may make sense within its own context, language system and/or realm of connotations but placed next to one with a different context, language system and/or realm of connotations creates a jarring effect. A visual example might be the shades

of red and green placed together in patterns on 1960s psychedelic posters, which cause what is called a *beating effect*. This is analogous to the technique in the recording of psychedelic music from that era, where two tones close to each other in pitch are played simultaneously: the proximity of the two tones, each with a set of harmonics above them, produces an unsettling auditory beating effect. In all these examples, the gapping effect between the two extremes leads to a kind of epiphany when we realise the difference between the two.

Groovy music tends to have syncopated rhythms. These emphasise and give energy to upbeats - moments where the dancer's limbs are going against gravity, giving a bouncy feel which is propulsive but not in a straight, driving four-to-the-floor way, as would be the case in full-on psytrance styles for example. Embellished movements also tend to happen on the upbeat/uplift (Fitch 2016: 4). Berlin's theory of optimum perceptual stimulation in shows that a medium amount of syncopation gives the greatest feelings of pleasure and wanting to move a balance between challenge and automated/synchronous movements that is key to flow states (Witek et al. 2014: 9).

Entrainment to the beat is the simplest kind of entrainment and the simplest way of social bonding through simultaneous movement. Deviations from timing induce the body to move and are effectively an invitation to others to join the simultaneous actions and to join the group (Jensenius et al. 2010: 18). We seem to have an innate desire to entrain our movement with each-other: as discussed earlier, entrainment encourages and signals group cohesiveness. Entrainment may have developed in the way described by the CQS theory, but ultimately because we are social animals and feel the need to empathise and bond with other human beings. Entrainment can happen deliberately - when people play in an instrumental ensemble for instance - or it can occur in a more natural and instinctive way, such as when applause becomes synchronised so that people begin to clap together and a pulse emerges (Van Noorden 2010: 158-60). These kinds of occurrences, like any repetitive action performed by the human body, happen at a specific frequency and the frequencies evoke real life body states and other connotations.

Van Noorden suggests some examples of the relationship between BPM and body states, for example 12-20 BPM is the average breathing rate of human beings, 60-80 BPM is the normal resting heart rate, marching is around 120 BPM, jogging around 160 BPM, the maximum breathing rate is about 180 BPM, running pace is generally around 200 BPM and the average maximum heart rate is around 220 BPM. Psytrance producers generally identify subgenres by BPM. Progressive psytrance is around 130 BPM, full-on is generally around 140 BPM and dark psy and forest styles around 150 BPM upwards. My analysis of 25

psytrance tracks bears this out, with progressive styles falling between 128-138 BPM so a bit faster than marching speed but still a moderate pace with room for breadth of movement and room for groove, full-on (including London full-on) at around 140-147 BPM, which would reduce the time for larger movements and promote smaller gestures in response to the pace and dark psy and forest styles from 147-155 BPM, so getting towards jogging speed and a sense of the body in extremis and still more compact body movements. There was one experimental dark psy track which was an outlier at 180 BPM and has a sense of urgency and overwhelming speed that gives a sense of being out of breath.

The number of breakdowns in the tracks was also interesting, with darkpsy styles having fewer and full-on styles having more. Fewer breakdowns means more continuity of body movement in response to the music, more stamina required from the dancer and with dark psy speeds, more compact movements. The feeling of having to push your body to keep up with the beat is redolent of the Gnawa trance ritual Kapchan describes, where the dancer follows the beat of the drum which gradually increases speed, driving the person's movements into a frenzy until they are taken over by it and fall into a trance. In the case of dark psy the tempo would usually stay the same, but the sense of being driven to an extreme state of body and mind and losing control is similar.

DeNora's notions of warm and cool consciousness are interesting when applied to psytrance tempi. Warm consciousness (linked to high paced dance music in her discussion) transports the mind away from the body, whilst cool consciousness (associated with slower) brings a person back to an awareness of embodiment (DeNora 2000: 313-15). This fits with the data I have described above (for example, high paced dark psy overtaking the body and unleashing the mind) and Maryam's comments about more space between beats giving more breadth for movement and creativity, which would require more focus of attention towards a dancer's body. So the speed of the music can facilitate different movements, where slower BPM seems more fluid and gives time for the hips to swing and the body to bounce (for example in slower styles like progressive psytrance) instead of 'stomping' (a common descriptor in psytrance circles, most associated with dancing to full-on styles). Some feel that too many breakdowns interrupt the continuous hypnotic motion of the music and hinder trancing, therefore they see music with many breakdowns as less psychedelic. On the other hand some hold that other elements such as the higher melodic leads and enigmatic noises are more psychedelic and that the absence of these in favour of a heavy, driving bass and beat impedes their trancing.

What of the relationship between psychoactive substances and groove in psytrance?

Psychoactive substances make reality seem more vivid and also make us give it more attention. They afford a clarity and novel perspective when listening to music - it can seem as if you are listening to it for the first time. They alter our sense of the passage of time and boost our physical abilities and sensitivity to stimuli in our environment - this reframes our perception of the music we hear (Fachner 2011: 264). Psychoactive substance induced altered states of consciousness (ASCs) can be encoded by producers and decoded by listeners and dancers, though whether they receive the intended message in the signal is dependent on circumstance: the reframing that occurs may make a four-to-the-floor beat seem groovy or may interfere with the perception of groove encoded by a producer (Fachner 2011: 264).

3.4 Conclusions

My research shows that there are a lot of 'formal' trance elements in psytrance music production, parties and dance-floors, including sonic anaphones of traditional instruments, ritualistic preparation and induction processes involving psychoactive substances, entrainment to the pulse and rhythmic structures of music, a gradual increase of intensity in music and tempo throughout the night and people's usual sense of self and place being overwhelmed by various sensory input. It is evident that trancing features in all the different settings of psytrance, for example, parties, music production and deep listening in solitude. A network of trance performances and experiences, common to all settings where psytrance music is heard, arises and it could be said that different local trance practices are encoded in the music, felt in the body and decoded in various local settings and in global psytrance festivals, propagating global style and imbuing global style with local trance elements.

Very intense experiences, say, where someone is dancing at night time during a fast-paced forest trance set and has a feeling of being transported away, or being 'possessed' by a trance persona, I would denote as ergotropic trance and also link these with DeNora's concept of warm consciousness. However, in London, where psytrance tends to be strident and fast moving in style and where there also seems to be a growing interest in forest/dark style psytrance, the scene seems less spiritually focussed: scene participants might not agree that intense ergotropic trancing is taking place. So the prevalence of intense, fast-paced music and frenzied dancing does not necessarily correlate neatly with ergotropic trance and warm consciousness.

The types of trance that might be encouraged by music associated with flow or groove may be inwardly focused and could be connected to DeNora's idea of cool consciousness. Then again, flow could be connected with either fast music or slower paced music because slower paced music gives time for body movement but driving, fast paced music carries us away in a flow - this reading would connect flow with warm consciousness. Styles with more melodies like progressive, Goa and psybient elicit flowing upper body movement and hand gestures in dancers. Groove would indicate slower tempos, and perhaps also implies more movement in the bass in the form of 'funky' basslines. In general, the slower pace allows for a greater breadth of movement and exploration of the kinesphere around the body, so groovy music allows sensuality and desire to be expressed in dancing. The type of trance induced by groovy music might be described as embodied and primal, bringing the trancer back to an awareness of their body via sensuality. It is difficult to assign categories like this to different styles of psytrance because there are things that are contradictory, for instance Maryam's statements about having room to move her body and experiment with dancing with slower paced music: for her, slower paced music brings her back to a sense of her embodiment more than fast paced music would. All things considered I am minded to connect states of groove and flow with low arousal or trophotropic trance states.

Music is a gestural language; different styles and speeds of psytrance elicit different Gestalts and meanings in the mind of trancers and these conjure up different moods, body states and affects through semiotic processes where complex layers of meaning added based on our experiences and memories. We read the gestural script contained within music when we listen and trancers translate it for themselves and others in the movements of their bodies when they dance. For instance, London style is fast and hard and elicits fast and hard dancing which for some does not instigate flow or groove, as it is too fast and too regular. Lainey stated in her interview that other countries, for instance Mexico where she was recently invited to play at a large festival, appreciate her slower, more melodic progressive psytrance more than people in the UK - is it because it fits better with a more flowing, groovy style of dancing that is more to the liking of the Mexican audience? Perhaps people in the Mexican scene prefer more melody because it encourages more breadth and room for upper body movement? Is this also true of the commercial Bristol scene, which favours more flowing and groovy music? Perhaps slower paced music as well as providing the body with breath for movement provides more space for meditation and for spirituality.

The London full-on style on the other hand is frenzied and ecstatic rather than reverent and spiritual. This is transcendence through excess: the loud, driving music representing the body in extremis, out of control and carried away. In this style of psytrance internal, gut or

body noises do the job of focusing the attention inwards and the focus and emphasis on the beat and bassline do the same? Trance dancers may make smaller, more impactful steps to this faster and more driving music, which may be why the word 'stomp' is often used in reference to going to have a dance on the dance-floor. Both gentle and small movements according to Van Norden are less effortful to maintain in a state of equilibrium and stability whilst heavy, driving music and sudden noises would induce more ballistic movement in response. If the music is very fast this represents a challenge and if you can keep up you are rewarded with and bio-kinetic resonance or bodily flow state and the fact that this is a collective effort makes easier to achieve because of factors relating to coalition quality signalling.

As discussed earlier, some psytrance scenes lean towards a more spiritual focus in their musical and extra-musical characteristics, whereas other scenes have a more secular feel, such as the British scene. As psytrance is a DIY scene on a local level with scene participants creating the music and events, it seems logical to say that in less spiritually focussed scenes the majority of scene participants will have a less spiritual outlook on life. This would be true vice versa in a scene that is more focussed on spirituality and ritual: participants with a less spiritual outlook would be in the minority.

Terms like 'groove' and 'flow' have connotations of psychological and physiological mechanics and so provide a way for people without a spiritual outlook to describe their trance state without the connotations of ritual and spirituality. This may be a deliberate choice of words to avoid alluding to trance as they are not comfortable with the connotations of the word or simply that these words best convey their trance style - devoid of spiritual or religious experience. However, some people with a spiritual outlook use these terms and use them interchangeably with trance, so again, there is not a neat and convenient relationship between these concepts and participants' embodied experiences: the choice of words can't predict exactly the kind of trance experience people are having in terms of warm versus cool consciousness and level of arousal.

So what does the use of different words by different people to describe trance dancing tell us about psytrance scenes? Ultimately it tells us that, despite the homogeneity of some aspects of the culture, people's outlooks and experiences are multiple, and that scene participants are aware of this diversity. That some participants use a number of different words to describe their dance-floor experiences speaks to the variability of experience the same person can have and how it is contingent on multiple factors: mood, party location, the style of music played, the type of psychoactive substances used and more.

So if psytrance is multiple, diverse and variable and should be addressed as such in research, this brings me back to the question of the usefulness of Turner-based approaches which refer to tribes and sacred rites. I think that his work is only as useful to the discussion of psytrance as far as comparisons to traditional trance are. We must remember that psytrance trancing is intrinsically different from traditional trance forms because trancing is culturally embedded. We should be wary of drawing comparisons between trancing in Western leisure settings and, say, the initiation rites of tribal peoples, which diminish their value through appropriation. That said, people are in a sense possessed by the cultural mind of the local scene and also communicate this to others in the gestures they make with their body. In addition people have a range of pre-existing characters within them that they take into psytrance parties and may be 'possessed' by. We mimic others and have a desire to be entrained with others to beat or move with others in concert, so the movements we see others perform influence our own movements and are added to our gestural vocabulary. When new gestures are recontextualised on different trance-floors, stylistic elements of trance are transported.

The fact that local scenes are oriented differently with regards to things like spirituality, religious symbolism and whether scene participants see themselves as part of a tribe, means that Turner and Maffesoli's theories will not apply to certain scenes - unless scholars wish to foist those ideas onto scenes regardless of how they view themselves.

I believe alternative paradigms that avoid too many spiritual connotations should be used in conjunction with Turner and Maffesoli's theories, such as the BKR and CQS theories I talked about earlier. By applying CQS theory to a local scene one could say that the sum total expression of musical and extra-musical style, music preference, psychoactive substance preference, outlooks of scene participants and all the other characteristics of a local scene are its Coalition Quality Signal (hereafter CQ signal, to differentiate from CQS, Coalition Quality Signalling as a process). This view brings the expression of embodied identity, group and individual, to the forefront of psytrance research and highlights how scenes perform a social function without resorting to the use of a tribal paradigm.

The expression of identity is multi-directional: from music producer via musical gestures, intensities etc. to listeners and dancers, from a dancer's body to other dancers via things like verbal descriptions of their experience, facial expressions, gesture and comportment, from dancers to producers and DJs via the same and from scene to scene via their CQ signal. There are many more complex meanings that can be generated and transmitted from trancer to trancer and scene to scene and it is beyond the scope of this thesis to investigate

more thoroughly, but I hope that the examples I have given demonstrate how these ideas can be applied to the study of psytrance.

Chapter 4: Come-up

Bass Desires: the Grotesque Body and British Psytrance

4.0 Introduction

In previous chapters I have alluded to the myriad cultural and socio-economic factors that impinge on the style of regional scenes and described how the resulting stylistic traits can be transmitted between people and between different geographic locations. In this chapter I use my own local scene in Britain as a case study to look more closely at some regionally specific influencing factors and stylistic traits and how they are transmitted between people and scenes.

British psychedelia has tended to take inspiration from the past, expressing nostalgia for a pre-industrial, pastoral golden age whose basis lies more in the realm of mythology than historical accuracy. On the other hand, British literature and film past and present is awash with science-fiction and the notion of technology-assisted social progress. Psytrance has a Janus-like perspective which encompasses idealised pasts and neo-tribal sensibilities whilst maintaining a visionary outlook that references space travel, cyborgs and the like ever more innovative music production technologies. British psytrance particularly exemplifies this dual horizon. It has inherited the nostalgia of preceding manifestations of British psychedelic culture, from Humphry Davy's experiments with Nitrous Oxide and Thomas de Quincy's exploratory use of opium at the turn of the 19th century to the psychedelic folk music of the 1970s and the acid house and rave scenes of the late 1980s and 1990s. It is also influenced by well-established literary traditions in science-fiction and by technological progress, from H.G. Wells to Dr Who and the Industrial Revolution to Tim Berners-Lee's creation of the World Wide Web. An anarchic humour prevails in the British psytrance scene, permeating and subverting its Arcadian nostalgia.

This chapter investigates how Britain as a local node of psytrance reassembles the culture of the global psytrance scene. Some dominant characteristics of British psytrance are

discussed via types of national identity and a further attribute specific to British psytrance, a humorous psychedelic sensibility, is argued for. The first section provides a brief introduction to psytrance and then presents five types of Englishness and a number of dominant attributes relating to those types, proposed by Martin Cloonan and other scholars writing more recently. The second section discusses some of the dominant attributes of Britishness identified in the first section, adding the perspectives of scholars in the field of psytrance. The final section argues for an additional dominant attribute in British psytrance, a humorous and introspective psychedelic sensibility, identified using Andy Medhurst's work on British humour and my analysis of psytrance music.

The British psytrance scene developed as nomads returned and recreated their Goa experience by organising parties in London. British psytrance became established with creative enervators like Raja Ram and Simon Posford at the vanguard. British-produced music was increasingly known for its innovation and quirkiness and leading artists from Britain became world players on the global scene. After the introduction of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act of 1994 (UK Government 1994) the British party scene was largely forced indoors, being exposed to a mainstream EDM audience and absorbing elements of club culture such as the adoption of a wider palette of recreational psychoactive substances. As de Ledesma observes, many rhizomatic lines of flight were dispersed at this time (2010) perhaps due to the response of the psytrance scene to the change in policy. Going underground resulted in the emergence of smaller local scenes in different regions of Britain who explored different creative paths simultaneously, leading to diversifications in style.

During this time scenes with their own creative lines of flight sprang up in many other parts of the world, with their own individual take on psytrance culture (Ryan 2010). The idiosyncratic style of Britain began to play a lesser role on the global scene; because of the popularity of full-on mainstream styles it was not as much in demand (De Ledesma 2010). This may also have been part of a more general trend as during the latter half of the 1990s, the popularity of British music waned in the US and elsewhere, the perception of its quirkiness changing from cutting-edge to hackneyed. During the more economically stable 2000s a new wave of British psytrance artists emerged and as a result of progress in technology, software and the internet becoming faster and more widespread, more budding producers now had the luxury of a virtual home studio in their bedroom and the benefit of increased contact with other producers around the world to better hone their craft. The British style has managed to stay relevant to the global scene with its own brand of full-on which still retains its individual quirkiness and humour. The British psytrance scene

continues despite increasing restrictions in government policy relating to public gatherings and recreational psychoactive substance use and mainstream British artists such as Avalon and Tristan and the many major labels based in Britain have achieved global notoriety.

When thinking about the United Kingdom, the nation or Britain, the land mass there is a tendency for people to think of England as most important or even synonymous with both, due to colonial history of the UK, the fact that England is the largest country in the union geographically and because the capital, London, is in England. My research indicated that this thinking is also present in psytrance, with people from other countries thinking of the London sound as an exemplar of music produced in the UK. Whilst there are no doubt parties taking place in Scotland and Northern Ireland, to my knowledge most of the parties, labels and artists are based in England and Wales. When I talk about the UK, Britain and the British scene in this chapter I therefore refer mainly to these areas, as my knowledge is restricted to the scenes in those regions. Whilst this language is colonising to some extent, the largest and most well-known psytrance scenes are based in England and Wales and have come to represent UK psytrance as a whole. In writing primarily about scenes based in England, it is important to talk about the effect that English identity has on British psytrance, not least because any conversation about UK or British identity would be remiss in not including the impact of England as a colonial power, on other countries in the union

4a. Britishness versus Englishness

Writing in his 1997 article on Britpop and Englishness, Martin Cloonan quotes Stuart Hall as saying “everywhere the question of Englishness is in contention” (Hall 1991: 26, Cloonan 1997: 65). The nature of English national identity is indeed a popular and contested topic. In his article Cloonan outlines five different types of Englishness, drawing from his own work, the work of Stuart Hall, Mark Fisher, Simon Frith and from newspaper and magazine articles written around the time. He then draws out what he feels are the dominant attributes within these types, critiquing their mainly exclusionary character. This first section of the chapter will use Cloonan’s types of Englishness and dominant attributes and add to them the views of scholars writing more recently on the subject, to bring the subject up-to-date.

The first style of Englishness discussed is *ambivalent Englishness*, which Cloonan states has its roots in social realist songs and is characterised by “a fascinated revulsion with Englishness” (1997: 55). He gives the example of punk, which whilst reactionary in spirit, had ambivalent politics which amounted to a disavowal of the structures of authority such as the state, the royal family and the music industry. Adding to this ambivalence was a contradictory nationalism based on xenophobic feelings towards America. Cloonan’s second

style of Englishness, *overt nationalism*, extended this attitude of xenophobia and nationalist pride a number of steps further to far-right, racist ideology expressed through genres like 'blood and honour' (Cloonan 1997: 55). Thirdly, *hip little Englishness*, for Cloonan is defined as being somewhere in between ambivalence and overt nationalism. Cloonan sees this type expressed through artists like Morrissey, whose music reflects their ambivalence toward English society with an added air of punk's reactionary-ness and vaguely directed critique. He points out that this type of Englishness in pop music has sometimes strayed over the line of ambivalence to a right-wing commentary on contentious issues such as race and immigration, by direct or more ambiguous means (ibid 1997: 55). Cloonan's fourth type, *hip big Englishness* is described as having both a national and international outlook and left-liberal political leanings. Billy Bragg and his folk troubadour-rooted stylings exemplify this type of Englishness, reimagining English patriotism in a left-nationalist stance that centres on the working class experience of life in England (ibid 1997: 56).

The fifth type of Englishness outlined by Cloonan in his article is perhaps the most relevant to psytrance. *Non-articulated Englishness* refers to all pop styles which do not have lyrics as the central focus of the music. He lists a few of the electronic genres of the 1990s, such as rave, techno and jungle as examples, highlighting their emphasis on rhythm and movement and identifies the lifestyle of the music scene, rather than the music itself, as the mode of expressing their English identity (1997: 57). To Cloonan, this style offers opportunities for the expansion of notions of Englishness, in that it has more ethnically diverse artists with an equally diverse range of texts. He sees it as offering perhaps the only real alternative at the time to the hegemony of what he calls *Eng. Lit. Pop* - lyric-based pop music drawing from what is historically the country's most important cultural export, English literature (ibid 1997: 57). This does seem like a usefully undefined category into which many musics could be placed, however I think that it is a good fit for psytrance, as a music genre and scene which tends to avoid taking any political position or mobilisation¹⁸. Cloonan settles on ambivalence and hip little Englishness as the most characteristic types of English national identity in 1990s pop music. Citing Schlesinger, who posits that the examination of inclusion and exclusion is key to understanding national identity, Cloonan goes on to list the attributes he finds the most dominant within these two types (Schlesinger 1987, Cloonan 1997: 58). I will outline these attributes with reference to the views of more recent scholars writing about English national identity.

¹⁸ See Riley et al 2010 for more discussion around the 'aloof' political position of EDMCs.

He begins by tackling the frequent conflation of British and English perpetrated by many English writers and musicians, who, in not acknowledging the problematic nature of this conflation, reveal a privileged outlook of which perhaps they are not aware. They are happy to refer to themselves as British, tacitly assuming England as the central country in the union, thereby symbolically colonising the other countries. On the other hand people from Wales may prefer to call themselves Welsh, highlighting their separateness from England and perhaps also from the uncomfortable connotations of 'Great Britain' and the exploits of the former British Empire (Cloonan 1997: 58-59). For Cloonan, regional divisions within England are also important markers of identity, as locality can mediate national identity. The North of England, for instance, has its own distinct identity and culture and also within it a multiplicity of regional divisions and allegiances, such as those between Yorkshire and Lancashire. The North is also frequently othered through a London-centric way of thinking (ibid 1997: 63). The views of Irene Morra (2013) are in line with Cloonan's on this subject. She comments that the overarching discourse of British pop music defines it as being post-Imperial, modern and with an 'of the people' folk sensibility (ibid 2013: 24). However, she points out that this is often expressed in very patriotic language, which reasserts the historical colonising power of Great Britain. The assumed centrality of England in the union functions in a similar way, which contradicts the idea of the British pop canon being a folk music (ibid 2013: 9).

Cloonan discusses the exclusion of non-white people and women from notions of Englishness, stating that the representative format of pop music consists generally of 'four white men with guitars' (Cloonan 1997: 47, Morra 2013: 109). He notes at the time of writing, that xenophobia directed at America is rife within the pop music scene. Damon Albarn of Britpop band Blur for instance, described their music as 'happy' and their image, 'smart', in contrast to the maudlin grunge genre from Seattle that was also popular in England (ibid 1997: 61). This type of exclusion is evident in Morra's observation that as modern youth culture became the dominant way that English nationality was represented abroad, for example during the late 1960s with the Beatles, its international 'face' automatically became a monolithic symbol of national pride. The 'British invasion' rhetoric sealed this fate in emphasising Britain's imperialist past (Morra 2013: 147). Morra suggests that pop music and pop culture in general, have found ways to revise history to exclude problematic events and narratives. She uses Danny Boyle's 2012 London Olympic Games opening ceremony as her example (Morra 2013: 17-32), where pop music, working people such as NHS staff, the landscape and ancient monuments were foregrounded in the representation of Britain to the rest of the world. Problematic histories such as Imperialism and slavery however, were

clumsily excised leaving noticeable gaps in historical timelines. Isambard Kingdom Brunel, for example, was featured speaking the words of Shakespeare, creating an awkward incongruity between histories and themes whilst appealing to a key cultural export: English Literature (Morra 2013: 17-26). Simon Featherstone charts the historical evolution of England's sense of nationhood, constructed from revisionist, nostalgic sources in an attempt to recover its identity in the wake of the Industrial Revolution, the collapse of the British Empire and two world wars (Featherstone 2009). Featherstone's view aligns with Morra's on Britain's unwillingness to deal with the embarrassments of its colonialist past. However he also highlights an introspective type of Englishness that has developed more recently, perhaps in response to the collective amnesia of the nation. He argues that a key attribute of Englishness is in fact this act of searching for its identity (2009: 182) so this is a quality that England lends to Britishness.

Simon Frith describes British pop music as essentially suburban in origin, expressing boredom and having the sound of 'suburban longing played out through metropolitan means' (Frith 1997: 275-76). This idea is echoed by many others, including Savage in his work on punk, *England's Dreaming* and Bracewell's attempt to locate Englishness in pop culture, *England is Mine* (Bracewell 1998, Savage 2002). Suburbia is a place of liminality, which oscillates between countryside and city, home and the workplace, childish and adult states of being and between "the mundane and the apocalyptic" (Frith 1997: 145). At all these intersections are anxieties over technology and modern life, something addressed by Cloonan's definition of nostalgia, which for him is also bound up with anti-technology sentiments. He asserts that pop has often defined itself in opposition to modernist movements (Cloonan 1997: 62). Frith and Bracewell describe how the boredom, longing and anxiety that characterise suburbia have spawned many a dandy, artist and musician. They also identify an undercurrent of excitement and potential transgression beneath the evenly spaced landmarks, orderly houses and neatly trimmed privet hedges (Frith 1997: 144-45, Bracewell 1998: 114).

Pop music has often aligned itself with the streets and the working class to garner authenticity. Both Cloonan and Morra state that the plebeian is the main representative of English national identity, lending to pop music the associated qualities of cheerfulness in the face of adversity and honesty (Cloonan 1997: 64, Morra 2013: 80). Indeed, in Morra's view the marginalised voice has become as British as the Queen or the BBC. However, the lionising of the poor working class does them no favours, instead merely strengthening the idea of class and upholding the hierarchical structures of society. This to her indicates an

overriding nostalgia and a received sense of tradition, heritage and identity in the way that British society views itself (Morra 2013: 41).

Taking into consideration all the above perspectives, some important characteristics of English pop culture come to the fore: nostalgia, introspection, nationalism (whether overt or presented in more ambiguous terms), valorisation of the working class poor in an appeal to authenticity, collective amnesia around the less appealing aspects of British history, the suburban sensibility of pop and the construction of national identity in opposition to perceived others (whether based on ethnicity, gender, regional alliances or xenophobia).

4.1 Albion Dreaming of Electric Sheep

As I have described in previous chapters, the psytrance dance-floor experience is one of sensory overload: music and visionary art inspired by psychedelic experience, decor, lasers and lighting, VJ projections, dry ice, the clothing style and adornments of party goers, collective dance and psychoactive substances. These technics combine to produce a liminal space which dissociates participants from the outside world, their day to day life, their usual concept of time and their ego, facilitating a transformation of the self (St John 2012b, van Straaten 2012). Psytrance music reflects and compliments the experience of using psychoactive substances. Rich sonic textures along with the temporal effect of long music tracks linked seamlessly over many hours, induce a state of mind akin to 'oceanic boundlessness', a sense of expansiveness and disintegration of ego described by users of psychoactive substances (Dittrich 1998). This may result from the temporary inhibition of filters the brain uses to process sensory information in a manageable way, allowing sensory information to flood in (Vollenweider and Kometer 2010).

LSD has had considerable influence on psychedelic culture in the 20th and 21st centuries and still features prominently in ever-increasing palette of psychoactive substances used in the psytrance scene. A key attribute of LSD is that it initiates the novelty effect in the brain, causing the familiar to be perceived as novel, a process that likely evolved in our early ancestors as a response to the threat of predation (Julien 2007). In his discussion of genre in Psytrance, Robin Lindop describes the psychedelic elements of the music as 'wacky', with textural sounds and quirky noises (Lindop 2010). These are placed in the mix, with a variety of production effects applied to them, particularly delay and reverb; the combination of these elements give a sense of space and the location of the listener within it, as if travelling through a cavernous, resonant tunnel (Rietveld 2010). There is a great sense of anticipation in the music, which constantly builds with intensity whilst the hypnotic minimalism of the bassline facilitates the trance state of the dancer; placed against the background of this

feeling of anticipation these quirky noises in contrast have a sense of momentousness and novelty.

Many of the disparate sounds found in psytrance are formed in very similar ways- taking a white noise effect or a saw wave and adding resonance and delay seems to be a particularly common starting point for engineering a sound. However, the key to the diversity and complexity of its textures lies in the skill of producers making slight alterations to parameters; fine tuning is a vital component of creative psytrance production. In that respect, for all the use of the latest music production software and hardware, there is again the sense of looking back to the past; the psytrance producer has the feel of an antiquarian watch maker or jewel cutter, obsessively poring over the minutiae of their work. From this point on in the chapter some anaphones will be identified, accompanied by a time value in parenthesis, so that in conjunction with the discography, the reader may find and listen to the sounds described.

The *vibe* is the particular ‘flavour’ of psytrance culture in a scene, a combination of the music, visual aesthetic, location, group of people and the surrounding culture that influences these (St John 2012a). Psytrance scholars have described how local scenes reconstruct the ‘vibe’ of the global culture in their own fashion, so that each scene has different regional qualities (St John 2012b). Parties in Britain, which has been influential in the development of psytrance globally, will still include cultural influences dating from psytrance’s Goa roots, such as art depicting Hindu deities, but also influences from its native folklore, for example the Green Man. Parties are often arranged on significant dates in the pagan calendar, so an event might be titled ‘Beltane Gathering’ for instance.

As explained in chapter 3, *communitas* is an experience of unity between a group of people in terms of mind-set and/or emotion and in a specific space and time. This usually occurs in a space between the everyday occurrences of structured society, such as tribal rituals (Turner 1969/2017). Psytrance events create spaces in which participants enjoy psychedelic *communitas*, a shared psychedelic state of mind, and engage in trance dance to facilitate transformations of the self (St John 2012b). Perspectives differ on whether events are more about leisure and entertainment than the spiritual. Psytrance parties do not constitute rituals per se; it is more appropriate to say that they incorporate ritual-like elements. However bona fide tribal rituals are not always serious in tone and can include play, humour and critique of the structures that give rise to the ritual and this is similar to the tone of psytrance parties, especially those in the UK.

A long history of popular music and diverse culture finds its way into British psytrance music. Cosmopolitanism in the English psytrance scene can be found in the wealth of foreign cultural influences and the variation in stylistic influence from other EDM genres, and the use of tonal devices that signify 'world music', like the Aeolian and Phrygian modes. The use of traditional instruments from around the globe, sounds that resemble those instruments and ritual-like elements in the music may reflect a conscientious aim on the part of producers to create trance-inducing music and are redolent of Tibetan Buddhist or Sufi ceremonies. Hand drums and wooden percussion can be heard in Tristan's 'Talking Technicolour' (2013) and Dickster's 'One and Together' (2014). A 'rain stick' shaker effect is heard in 'One and Together', particularly prominent at the end of the track as if marking the end of a ritual. Church choir-like cadences like those found in Dickster's 'One and Together' add a cod reverence that is subversive considering England's long history as a Christian country. It is humorous in effect and yet also imparts something of a bone fide feeling of transcendence and spirituality.

The reproduction of the sound of these ancient instruments found worldwide could be a synecdoche for the ancient, the primitive and for tribal peoples and their rituals. However, this also constitutes cultural appropriation and othering and one could argue this is colonialism at work. Use of 'ethnic' instruments may also reflect a desire for spiritual well-being, identity work and even enlightenment. By combining these sounds with technology and science-fiction references the music can also be thought of as envisioning a utopian technocracy which blends technological enhancement with a return to ancient tribal wisdom - a kind of nostalgia which is important in Michel Maffesoli's concept of the neo-tribe (Maffesoli 1996). This is notable in counter-cultural musics that preceded psytrance, for example The Master Musicians of Joujouka - the Berber Sufi trance musicians who inspired the Beat Generation and the Rolling Stones (Schuyler 2000). Other examples include Ravi Shankar's collaboration with the Beatles and the influence of Asian sacred music on minimalism (Reck 1985).

Psytrance as a percussion based music is similar to ritual drumming, and with its drones, beat entrainment and simple harmonic overtones is similar to didgeridoo music, jaw harp, Tuvan throat singing and singing bowls, all ancient instruments used in ceremony and ritual, some of which are found all over the world, the jaw harp especially (Pegg, Lowe 2011, Wright 2014). An example of a jaw harp like sound common to psytrance, can be found in 'Talking Technicolour'. Repeated notes in dotted rhythms make the sound almost identical to the plucked idiophone. The didgeridoo, jaw harp and throat singing all focus on the inward, bodily experience, using the body's cavities for resonance. As will be discussed later,

English psytrance music is replete with anaphones that suggest the sound of the inner workings of the body, so this also seems significant in that respect.

According to Lindop, British psytrance is a meta-genre, *psychedelicizing* and co-opting other subgenres in a way that ensures it stays current and does not stagnate. For Lindop, difference and cosmopolitanism are the traits that characterize the UK scene (Lindop 2010). Rietveld also highlights the cosmopolitanism of British psytrance and puts this in context as both a response to “electrified culture” and globalisation. In terms of the history of psytrance she, like Lindop, considers London the epicentre of Goa trance, and that it is still today engaged in the repackaging of difference. St John similarly describes psytrance as a ‘difference engine’ (Rietveld 2010, St John 2012b). This relates to Cloonan’s hip big Englishness, in the way that the local culture is both national and international. On the other hand the psytrance scene is overwhelmingly white and its DJs and music producers generally white and male (Saldanha 2005). It therefore also falls into two of Cloonan’s exclusionary categories (Cloonan 1997).

Psytrance also falls into Cloonan’s non-articulated category, which challenges Eng. Lit. Pop, in that it has few lyrics and so is less signified than other pop musics (Cloonan 1997). Despite being not being very racially diverse, it still offers a challenge to Eng. Lit. Pop, by allowing the possibility for new kinds of Britishness. Psychedelicizing other music genres also assists in maintaining diversity as it is able to incorporate the diversity of other scenes (in for example, the case of psybreaks, which may attract a crowd also interested in breakbeat and from there perhaps DnB, and so on). In this way psytrance seems to fit with Morra’s post-imperial modern pop sensibility, without crossing the line into nationalism (Morra 2013), but at the same time, the psychedelicizing of other genres seems rather like an act of colonialism. Featherstone’s observations about revisionism and nostalgia might also be applicable to psytrance: English psytrance culture utilizes the landscape, mythology, ancient places, 1960s counter-culture and technology in its conception of itself but neatly sidesteps all the problematic events and issues in-between (Featherstone 2009).

As previously noted, the development of psytrance has been marked by change and disagreement (St John 2012b). Contestation gives rise to liminality in that liminal spaces can be found between opposing ideas (Lewis 2008). In the case of psytrance culture, the liminal can be located between, for example, notions of ancient wisdom and utopian, technologically advanced futures, or experiences with psychoactive substances such as LSD, which have an onset, peak experience and post-trip state. Part of what makes psytrance so interesting is this collision between nostalgia and modernism.

England's landscape is suffused with myth, mysticism and ancient landmarks: Tintagel Castle and Arthurian legend, ancient pagan stone circles like Stonehenge, Robin Hood and Sherwood Forest, and woodland faeries. In the wake of the devastation of World War I and the rapid change and industrialisation it brought, composers like Vaughan Williams, Butterworth, Ireland and Bax wrote music to re-enchant and restore the landscape in the British psyche, in a roots revival that captured the collective nostalgia for a pre-industrial pastoral idyll. Similar revivalist lines of flight went out from the aftermath of World War II and the economic hardship of the 1950s, fostering the conditions for psychedelic folk and rock to emerge (Young 2010). Artists like Syd Barrett wove the magic of their childhood stories and nursery rhymes into their music, for example the anthropomorphic animals of *The Wind in the Willows* (Grahame 1908/2012) and its depiction of the god Pan, the piper referred to in Pink Floyd's album *The Piper at the Gates of Dawn* and the psychedelic oddity of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (Carroll 1865/2015).

Nostalgia for a pastoral golden age and environmental concerns seem to be reflected in psytrance via the use of anaphones representing forest noises, soundscapes of animals, insects and birds and water-like sounds. Laughing Buddha's track 'Shiva Sunrise' (2013) has, for example, the haunting, bird-song-like noises and the sound of crickets or cicadas at dusk. A chirruping 'frog croak' is heard in 'Talking Technicolour', gusts of wind are evoked. Other 'wet' noise examples can be found in Dickster's 'One and Together'. English psytrance also brings to mind mystical and mythological landscape, through the use of anaphones and samples from fantasy and science-fiction TV programmes and film. 'Magical' noises are common, evoking the sweep of a 'magic wand' with a sound similar to set of chimes, bells or a harp glissando. Dickster's 'One and Together' has exemplary sounds of this kind (see Appendix A for a spectral analyser screenshot showing this sound) where a downward, metallic sweep occurs. A background, 'magic wand sweep' then occurs as the initial sweep fades away, a reverb tail echoing back from the original sound, like a ghostly apparition.

Rietveld states that the cosmopolitanism of UK psytrance is a response to capitalism and anxieties about modern life and technology (Rietveld 2010). In psytrance, samples of 1950's B movies, TV science programmes, digitally mediated human utterances (cyborgs and/or robots) and manipulated digital sounds can have dual meanings. Firstly, as in Dickster's 'One and Together', which borrows from the most recent *Star Trek* movie (Abrams 2013) are re-contextualised to communicate positive ideas concerning the future: unity and group cohesion - "Our minds, one and together", and technological advancement - "Your future is going to be far more futuristic than originally predicted".

In this example, multiplicities of sounds, such as the use of different voice samples in the track, rich texture and well-timed cues, build-ups and strong bass drops (which facilitate collective entrainment) give a feel of community or solidarity. Other samples are re-contextualised to signify less positive ideas about the future, for instance a warning of impending apocalypse. Science-fiction samples then can become alien transmissions and the use of devices like sirens, 'submerged' metallic sounds and industrial noise seem to invoke that post-apocalyptic future. A good example are the sonar-like sounds found in Laughing Buddha's 'Shiva Sunrise'.

As Taylor states in the account of his research into the New York psytrance scene during the 1990s, the scene participants seemed to have largely avoided the anxieties felt in 1960s counter-culture over technology's advance and the potential anti-modernist position that entails. They incorporated music technology used in events (then vinyl and turntables) into their conception of the 'natural order' of the world (Taylor 2001). His informants were of the mind-set that for different eras, humans have developed different tools to facilitate the same kind of ritualistic drumming, music and dancing. Taylor also encountered scene participants whose embrace of technology left them ambivalent about the natural world and distanced themselves from the 'tree-hugging' hippies who viewed music technology as *spiritechnics* (Taylor 2001, St John 2012b). The same attitudes are apparent in today's psytrance culture, with its music production software and CDJs. As Rietveld points out there is a DIY aesthetic to the British EDM scene and in psytrance specifically (Rietveld 1998a, Rietveld 2010). A large proportion of psytrance's audience are also practitioners; DJing, writing their own music, connecting with others online for production advice, collaborating with friends and mentoring each other. Connecting with others in this way may also help to assuage concerns over technology and modernity. The DIY aspect of English psytrance and its location in suburban bedroom studios, links to Frith's description of "suburban longing played out via metropolitan means", as does the location of psytrance events, between rural sites, city 'squats' of industrial spaces and in the virtual world of internet forums and social media (Frith 1997).

Cloonan and Morra agree that the archetypal working class man is the national representative of English pop culture on the world stage, functioning as a simulacrum for authenticity (Cloonan 1997, Morra 2013). Psytrance differs from other pop music in this respect because it is a decidedly middle-class affair. Even at the beginning, those participating in the early Goa parties first had to travel there at no small cost. DJ equipment, computers and sound systems are expensive and psytrance events are usually a labour of love, usually just breaking even or taking a loss. There may however be a sense in which

psytrance appeals to this working-class archetype via the use of comical sounds and samples, which will be addressed in the final section.

4.2 The Electrickster & the Grotesque

Graham St John describes psytrance parties and festivals as “vehicles for transgressive and disciplined concerns articulated in rites of risk and consciousness” (St John 2014). Ecstatic aims are defined as the immediate concerns of the participants on the psytrance dance-floor, the transgressive ritual sacrifice of *puissance* to achieve a state of transcendence (Bataille 1997, St John 2006, Van Veen 2010). Conversely, activist aims are concerned with not only the immediacy the dance floor but also disciplined concerns beyond the party, for example maintaining the local psytrance scene, environmental activism, or viewing scene participation as a political act (Riley et al. 2010a, O'Grady 2012). Whilst the ecstatic state might leave the body feeling ‘wasted’, it can result in an elevation of mental and/or spiritual wellness for participants, the performance of risk thereby becoming a means of achieving a state of wellness. The performance of risk can also help to bind a group of people together through intense camaraderie (Kavanaugh and Anderson 2008). Risky and subversive behaviours have pervaded British pop culture and given that psytrance has inherited that history, some of them will be outlined next.

Before hippy culture arrived from the USA in the 1960s, areas of London were home to a multi-ethnic immigrant population, bohemians and freaks. As the US ‘Summer of Love’ of 1967 was underway and psychedelic rock and the hippie movement reached their zenith in the UK, young people crossed traditional boundaries of sex, substance use and protest (Bratus 2011). During this time the *International Times* and *Oz Magazine* emerged as the underground press to the psychedelic counterculture there. It is interesting that in the areas of swinging London during this time there were two distinct countercultures. ‘The underground’ was anarchic, associated with psychoactive substances, voiced by the underground press, used humour and subversion, was rife with political activism and dissidence - and harassment by the police seemed only to fuel their agenda (Young 2010, Bratus 2011). Bands associated with the underground were, for example, Hawkwind, Soft Machine and the Deviants. The denizens of Gandalf’s Garden, a shop and café, on the other hand tended more towards a spiritual outlook and were concerned with issues such as vegetarianism, ethics and pacifism. Out of this side of the scene arose a magazine of the same name (taken from JR Tolkien’s fantasy novels) and artists like the very successful Incredible String Band (Rycroft 2003, Farren 2010). As covered in previous sections of the

chapter, this dichotomy is also apparent in psytrance culture as Taylor and Rietveld attest to (Taylor 2001, Rietveld 2010).

Punk rock rose from the ashes of the hippie movement and the poverty of the 1970s. Although as noted previously by Cloonan, its politics were ambivalent, its DIY sensibility and defiant spirit influenced many successive alternative music genres in the UK (Cloonan 1997, Savage 2002). The late 1980s and early 1990s brought the acid house and rave scenes from which Orbital, the Prodigy and the Shamen rose into mainstream pop culture. Orbital were named after the illegal raves that took place on green belt land at various points off the M25 orbital motorway around London. (Dayal and Ferrigno, McKay 1998). The illegal raves of the 1990s have been viewed as a response to the capitalistic, individual centred politics of the time. Psychoactive substance laws became more prohibitive and punitive and public order legislation was tightened in response to moral panic in the media over two infamous raves, Castlemorton in 1992 and Tribal Gathering in 1993 (Riley et al. 2010b). The new legislation put a stop to the larger raves and made a major impact on the scene; parties had to be smaller and stealthier. The rural free party scene grew as a consequence, and people also began using buildings obtained by calling upon squatters rights so the police could not evict them (ibid 2010b). The Amendment to Statutory Instruments of the Criminal Justice Act was passed in 2003 (UK Government 2003), containing a clause outlawing squat parties and also reducing the number of people constituting an illegal gathering to just twenty. Despite all this, the British free party scene is still thriving both in urban and rural areas and in fact it appears that increasing restrictions afford the opportunity of a little non-violent resistance, which is relished by scene participants.

Self-regulation, self-determinism, sovereignty over body and space (Riley et al. 2010a) and exercising the freedom to sacrifice *puissance* or vitality in the pursuit of *jouissance*, an ecstasy vastly exceeding mere pleasure and crossing over to the transgressive (Barthes 1975, Lacan 1992/2007) are clearly important features of the UK scene. Psytrance dance floors constitute Temporary Autonomous Zones (Bey 2003, Riley et al. 2010a) which represent a way to take a political stance while avoiding confrontation with authorities thus putting the continuation of the free party scene at risk. The political statement made on psytrance dance-floors is therefore simply a disengagement from the authorities and societal institutions (ibid 2010a). As Kavanaugh and Anderson point out, rave and EDMCs clearly have an anti-government or politically apathetic stance, but as they are not actively attempting to bring about social change in an organised fashion cannot be considered social movements per se (Bennett 1999, Kavanaugh and Anderson 2008).

The British legislative approach towards substance remains prohibitive and punitive and perhaps in response to this, British psychoactive substance users appear to valorise risk and bravado over conscientiousness and harm reduction (Riley et al. 2009). The Global Psychoactive substances Survey's findings seem to also support this. Respondents were asked whether they had taken a 'mystery white powder' in the last year and the UK result for those who answered 'yes' was 10.9%, more than double the average figure for the 17 countries involved in the survey. The only exception to this was Ireland's figure, a close 9.7%. In addition, the prevalence of ketamine over the previous year was 19.8% for UK participants, 3.5 times the average figure for all 17 countries and the highest prevalence of cocaine use out of all 17 countries at 33.7%. The UK had the highest reported use of LSD out of the 12 European countries in the last year and was joint 2nd with Ireland on MDMA prevalence at 45.2% with Netherlands the highest at 50.6%. Finally, respondents were asked whether they had ever purchased substances over the internet; the UK 'yes' response was 22.1%, twice the 11% average for the whole sample (Winstock 2014).

Research conducted in nightclubs during the 1990s and 2000s shows that ketamine made its way into UK nightlife during the latter half of the 1990s. The staples before this were ecstasy pills, LSD and amphetamines, but today there is a wider range of psychoactive substances available to clubbers and they are more likely to combine different psychoactive substances in one evening (Measham et al. 2009). Analysis of attitudes towards ketamine use in the British party scene has revealed its divisiveness amongst participants and the way in which this reflects on issues of body sovereignty and personal responsibility. Participants seen to be too 'wasted' on ketamine are derided for not knowing their own limits, contravening group norms of individual responsibility and self-regulation (Riley et al. 2009). This also suggests a certain amount of bravado by implying that needing assistance from others in a crisis of that kind is a sign of weakness.

One of the most notable aspects of British psytrance is the frequent inclusion of samples relating to psychoactive substance use which are re-contextualised in a playful and humorous way. For instance Sonic Species in his track 'Just another freak' (2014) uses samples from the film *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas* (Gilliam 1998), a dark comedy based on the book by Hunter S. Thomson set in the wake of the 1960s hippie movement where psychoactive substances play a central role in the plot. Sonic representations of psychoactive substance experiences, such as commonly reported feelings of psychedelic states of mind like 'oceanic boundlessness' are also represented in most psytrance tracks via the expansive sound, reverb and delay used to create a sense of space.

'Acid lines' like those found in Tristan's 'Talking Technicolor' track are also a defining aspect of all psytrance music. Tristan adds a very British, darkly-humorous element to these: uplifting church choir-like 'ah' samples are heard against samples from an awkward, staid 1950s television documentary about psychological experiments using LSD (Cohen 1956). The programme features Dr Sidney Cohen giving an experimental dose of acid to a 'normal' non-psychoactive substance taking housewife. An austere male voice announces: "This is a glass of water, colourless, tasteless. It contains 100 gamma of LSD 25. Let us observe the effect." It is as if the LSD dose is the sacrament in a religious ritual and this idea is then juxtaposed with playful noises, subverting the formality of the documentary and its reverent tone in a profane mimicry of the sacred.

Humour is conveyed through the use of samples from television and film comedies, quirky noises and sound effects from cartoons. In his track 'Weird Sick and Twisted' (2002) for example, Cosmosis uses a sample from the animated TV comedy series, *The Simpsons*, from the episode *Homer the Great* (Swartzwelder and Reardon 1995). In this episode Homer attends a meeting of the Stonecutters, a Freemason-like organisation and afterwards reports to his work colleagues "I saw weird stuff in that place last night: weird, strange, sick, twisted, eerie, godless, evil stuff...and I want in!" The use of the sample reflects the dark, trickster-ish side of psytrance found in its illicit night-time activities and the unsettling sound of darkpsy and forest psy styles. The whole sample is played in the track during a breakdown, but for the most part the words *weird*, *strange*, *sick* and *twisted* are repeated and treated with effects which mangle, stretch and slice them up. This forces a switch in code, where they become descriptors of psychedelic experience and the word *sick* gets a second coded meaning as a slang term meaning 'very good' or 'very cool'. The recontextualised sample also brings with it some of the subversive satire of the episode's plot by implying that psytrance culture is a shady, secret organisation. Sounds which reflect a more childish, playful or slapstick style humour are also a common feature of psytrance: Scorb's 'Mutoid' (2011), for example, utilises a sound effect of the kind used in the *Roadrunner* cartoons, where the character skids to a sudden stop, bringing the track to a halt to great comedic effect.

Speech samples that become distorted and fragmented such as the Cosmosis example above reveal an interplay between sense and nonsense. British psychedelia is infused with the nonsense of literary works like Lewis Carroll's *Through the Looking Glass: And what Alice Found There* (1871/2015) and nonsense poetry such as that by Edward Lear and Spike Milligan. This literature itself was influenced by earlier examples of nonsense such as that found in the Victorian music hall tradition (Elliott 2018: 69), the 16th century revels

staged by the Gray's Inn and in the works of William Shakespeare, such as *The Comedy of Errors* (Malcolm 1997: Chapter 1). Psytrance uses some of the same nonsense devices in the language of artist and event names, track and album titles, for example the menacing sounding 'Gamma Goblins' of Hallucinogen's *Lone Deranger* (1997) and also in the way producers treat sounds and samples in their music.

Richard Elliott in his work *The Sound of Nonsense* provides a guide to some of the devices used in nonsense language including the alteration of logic and the disruption of semantic meaning and syntax. He argues that all types of nonsense are connected by a *nonsense moment* where the listener experiences an episode of befuddlement in the process of apprehending the alterations and disruptions in language (2018: 12). In the Cosmosis example above, the meaning of the words in the sample is broken down and logic is altered through code switching to create new meanings. The Cosmosis sample is also a detached voice: one which was connected to a body when initially recorded and is now, in a sense, disembodied. According to Gibson's theory of affordances (2014), as discussed in chapter 2, we mentally associate a sound with the object or body and the action which caused the sound, even if we cannot physically see the thing which caused the sound. So, in the case of the Cosmosis track, it is as if the body implied by the sample is itself fragmented, broken down and made nonsensical. I also talked earlier in chapter 2 about quirky noises in psytrance, or haecceities, and how they are perceived as objects with affordances and can even become anthropomorphised. As Stephen Handel puts it "perceiving sound objects is much like perceiving faces" (1995: 458). We can relate to haecceities in psytrance as 'one of us' and empathise with them. We may also perceive haecceities as disembodied utterances - vocalisations that are devoid of sense.

Humour and subversion are linked to the idea of the carnivalesque: the performance of risk and the orgiastic dedication displayed by the British scene can be related to this concept from Mikhail Bakhtin. In his discussion of Rabelais' writing on the medieval Feast of Fools, a festival in which authority and institutions were temporarily subverted and burlesqued, Bakhtin draws comparisons with the Festival of Saturnalia (ancient Rome). These events acted as conduits for tensions in society and temporarily levelled social strata: all wore the *pileus*, the headwear that singled out a person as a freed slave, so that their status was indistinguishable (Bakhtin 1984). This guising and role reversal was common to both festivals.

The playful subversion found in British psytrance evokes the *trickster* archetype, who inhabits the plane between the sacred and profane. The fool, the circus clown and mythical figures like Loki and Eris are other examples of this archetype (Bakhtin 1984). UK music also

seems to have more reference to insanity in its samples and musical representations of madness expressed via cacophony, off-kilter tonality, and use of tri-tones, minor 2nd and 7th intervals. An example of the trickster archetype in the sound of English psytrance would be Tristan's personification of LSD in 'Talking Technicolour'. He uses a rasping saw tooth wave, much like the distortion of an electric guitar, which bounces with dotted rhythms and syncopation and drives the music forward, functioning in a similar way to the classic Roland 303 synthesizer 'acid lines' of the 1980s and 1990s. Tristan's version is deeper, intrusive, insistent and a little menacing, appearing just after a sampled voice announces "LSD-25". The result is a fun and celebratory personification of LSD but one that also insinuates mischief, a potential loss of control, or the ability to lead one into madness. This device began as somewhat a trademark for Tristan and is now widely used in UK psytrance (Tristan 2013). Similar devices representing madness and the occult are found in heavy metal music (Walser 1993). Reference to madness can also perhaps be linked with the Greek mystery cult of Dionysus with its drunken excess and ecstatic dancing, and Roman Bacchanalia cults, which had their provenance in the ecstatic practices of ancient Greece (Baldini 2010).

De Ledesma describes psytrance from the UK as technical, twisted, witty and eccentric (2010: 107), whilst Lindop describes it as having its own particular psychedelic sensibility built around the use of wacky sounds and cartoon-like psychedelia (2010). Andy Medhurst, in his discussion of British humour concludes by saying that there is no one national humour, but there are multiple styles of humour that could be considered English or British due to proximity with that culture and by referencing specific aspects of that culture that are not exportable to other countries. He also feels that humour is very important to the English sense of nationhood (Medhurst 2005). There are many comical elements to English psytrance: squelchy noises, impish humour, samples relating to excessive psychoactive substance use and many samples from comedy films and television programs, for example *The Simpsons*, are peppered throughout English psytrance music. The use of this kind of humour could be viewed as an appeal to the 'plebeian as national representative' trope described by Morra and Cloonan (1997, 2013).

In his discussion of *The Royle Family* TV programme, Medhurst describes how the working class are drawn upon for humour and in particular the character Jim Royle, and his vulgar toilet humour. His catchphrase "...my arse" and lines like "Nowhere like your own toilet, is there?" could have been plucked straight from Rabelais, however Medhurst points out that although *The Royle Family* and other working class comedies have a strong sense of the carnivalesque, they are not political per se, or even very transgressive (Medhurst 2005: 69). The vulgar humour functions as a "drama of self-affirmation", affording a comforting feeling

of familiarity and belonging which soothe anxieties over the fast pace of modern life with its globalisation, migration, economic problems and technological progress (ibid 2005: 187). Working class comedies of this type are about celebrating an identity and way of life and about “refusal rather than uprising” (ibid 2005: 69). This fits very well with Cloonan’s ambivalent Englishness (1997: 55) and also reflects the psytrance scene’s tendency to be apolitical.

Medhurst describes Jim Royle as a “beached trickster” whose grotesque body connects him to the carnivalesque. He observes that the carnival body “lumbers slobberingly through English comedy in an unquenchable variety of guises”, giving other examples including the *Carry On* film series and grotesque 1990s TV phenomenon ‘Mr Blobby’ (Medhurst 2005: 145). English psytrance seems to celebrate the grotesque body, through a proliferation of ‘wet’, squelchy and gurgling noises which could be viewed as anaphones for the digestive system and the innards of human bodies in general. Sonic Species’ track ‘Just another Freak’ is full of these types of sounds, where the standard ‘psy-squelch’, as it is known, is deployed. The psy-squelch is a sound common to psytrance globally, but to my ears, at least, the squelches in UK psytrance sound more organic, rounded and wet. Perhaps this results from the value UK psytrance producers seem to place on well-crafted, intricate sound synthesis. There are also human voice-like sounds which are sometimes simply primal exclamations, or spoken or sung samples that have been modified. Scorb’s ‘Mutoid’ uses breath-like noises and features a guttural, highly modified voice leading in and out of the track - a single syllable extended over time with a gradated timbre, as if the speaker’s pharynx and larynx have ‘mutated’, becoming weirdly misshapen and distended.

As noted previously, Britain was a nexus for the Goa trance sound and that psytrance retained the Goa influence as the 1990s progressed. In this period De Ledesma says the music was ‘traditionally’ psychedelic in terms of having elongated structures, and being experimental and rhizomatic in quality (De Ledesma 2010: 107). During the 2000s, English psytrance had to adapt to the world market, where there was a growing preference for full-on, a more strident, commercial style originating in Israel. English psytrance gradually followed this trend, becoming more bassline oriented and physical thereby retaining its relevance on the global scene (De Ledesma 2010). Lindop also charts how the UK developed its own version of full-on psytrance with a particular psychedelic sensibility based around cartoon-like psychedelia (2010). De Ledesma opines that UK psytrance has succumbed to commodification and has inherited a wider palette of psychoactive substances than the LSD of Goa trance days, but he concludes that on balance UK psytrance is still rhizomatic in its identity. He cites its link to 1960s counterculture via psytrance progenitor

Raja Ram and its sense of humour and eccentricity, as being the factors that connect it to its Goa past, despite the loss of 'authentic' psychedelic characteristics (2010).

The shift in style that De Ledesma and Lindop describe appears to be from a Deleuzian 'body without organs' psychedelicalness, with elongated structures that form a plane of consistency from which sound emerges on a 'wave of becoming' (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, Hemment 2004), to a more Bakhtinian, body-oriented and carnivalesque psychedelicalness (Bakhtin 1984). A look at non-British versus British psytrance album titles, track titles and samples reveals that the non-British releases include more references to aliens, outer-space and spirituality whereas British titles seem more often concerned with inner space, referencing embodied experience, the mind, insanity and the individual psychedelic experience (see Appendix A4). References to the inner workings of the body are frequent in psytrance across the global scene, for example the kick drum, which sounds like a heartbeat.

4.3 Decline and New Directions

Many of my interview participants agreed that they had seen a decline in the UK scene in the last seven to ten years. Reasons suggested for this ranged from increasingly restrictive anti-rave and squat legislation, and increased costs from local councils and authorities for licensed events. In Robin's experience, the same has occurred in mainland Europe. Jake highlighted that during 2004-2005, when Glade Festival is at its peak, magic mushrooms were still subject to a legal loophole and widely available and that things changed after they were made illegal. He also remembers a new guard of party organisers, some of them Brazilians, starting to run parties in London during 2009 to 2010. He reports that there was a lot of innovation in parties and big names being booked to play during this time. Since then, both Lainey and Jake identified a shift in popularity from the 'standard sound' to a darkpsy sound. Lainey also noted that parties became 'sketchier': they were smaller and had less effort put into their organisation. She also suggested that perhaps there was an increase in psychoactive drug use over the years that changed the vibe. Jake commented that squat parties peaked in 2007 to 2008 as the smoking ban came in and people could no longer smoke inside in licensed bars and clubs. Adam agreed with this, saying this also changed the nature of the chill-out room in licensed venues and that this became more of a second music space.

In terms of how my interviewees characterised British sound, Robin said that in the UK there was older scene and an older crowd and that although they partied hard in terms of

psychoactive substance taking, they were “responsible munters”. She identified the UK sound as ‘adult’: meaning polished, mature, well-produced and clever - but also accessible, with universal appeal. She highlighted artists like Shpongle, Tristan, Dexter and Laughing Buddha and labels like TIP and Twisted as being the representative sound of the UK to outsiders. These are the ‘main players’ in the scene and having worked together for many years and are “tight” and have influenced each other’s sound.

Jake found the UK sound difficult to define. He stated that psytrance styles were ‘Briticized’ by UK artists but that saying there was a British style of music per se, would be too strong a statement. He felt that, looking at the global scene as a whole, there is more homogeneity in style than difference. Likewise, the experience of festivals abroad when compared to those in the UK is to him, very similar. He did point out some small differences, saying that in the UK we may be more likely to have tea and cake available, where as in mainland Europe this might be Açaí smoothies and healthy energy balls - a comment that Ad Simeon also made. We also discussed the spirit of fun and silliness in British festivals compared to elsewhere in mainland Europe and that people take themselves less seriously at parties, dressing up in wacky, impractical costumes. One other suggestion was the possibility that the UK’s late licensing laws being introduced very recently when compared to other European countries meant that more of an after-party culture developed here.

Ad Simeon also pointed out the homogeneity of style in psytrance globally, saying the décor of the main room is the same wherever the party is and that the chill space almost universally tends to be an afterthought to party organisers. He thinks that the types of drugs popular in a particular locale affects style, in terms of the length of parties and the type of music that is played. For instance if acid is popular in a region, that is a much longer experience than some other types of psychoactive substances and a longer party is required to accompany it.

I asked my interview participants about what regional styles in the UK there were. Several people pointed to the full on, driving, gritty and industrial London sound. Sam commented that in general, the UK prefers its EDM styles darker and faster, giving examples of other genres, like DnB and dubstep. Chris agreed that a national style and regional styles exist but that they hard to define. He expressed an appreciation for music from artists in the West Country, which he finds very psychedelic. Robin also talked about the West Country, saying that they have a “huge scene” which is very groovy and where they make an effort to dress up in fluorescent clothing, fairy outfits and the like. Jake talked about West Country being distinct in style and identified psytrancers in Bristol as being very involved and proactive in making. He observes that the preferred style in the Bristol area is “dark progressive”. Sam

mentioned that the Bristol scene used to favour lighter, “fluffier” music but that they seem to have shifted towards darkpsy, following suit after London.

Sam and Robin talked about the Northern scene being more “banging” - more hardcore and techno influenced. Suggestions for why this might be the case were that this was a key region in the acid house rave scene and that party organisers appeal to the nostalgia of an older crowd for this era. Interviewees highlighted the prevalence of rave style glow sticks and the popularity of amphetamines and how this reflected rave history, suggesting that in southern scenes, psychedelics like LSD and floaty, hippie clothing styles are more popular.

A trend that I have noted recently is an upsurge in club nights specifically devoted to psychill, psychedelic ambient music and psydub genres, which are much more slowed down and relaxed psytrance styles. It is interesting that a number of people I have spoken to have mentioned a new club night, *Temple Project*, based around this music where a whole new crew of people they’d never seen before were in attendance, a younger group of people who they had not seen before at mainstream psytrance parties in Brighton.

So, there seems to be to some overall trends at the moment in British psytrance: a resurgence in the popularity of fast, dark and very experimental forest styles and the renewal of interest in slowed down psytrance styles whose home is the chill-out room at party or the chill-out tent festival, where in many countries people go to sit rather than dance, but with British parties and festivals people are willing to dance enthusiastically. There are many new styles of psychedelic ambient music which have sprung up in the last decade such as vapour wave, hypnagogic pop, green beat, chill wave, lo-fi, hipster-gogic pop. These display, like psybient music, traits of Derrida’s hauntology, an idea he expresses in his work *Specters of Marx* (1994: 9, 63, 202). He argues that the present is haunted by spectres of the past, which can include imagined futures. These spectres belong neither to the past nor the present therefore they are neither ‘dead’ nor ‘alive’, but deferred, absent or liminal. As Mark Fisher notes in his article on Afrofuturism, there is a temporal disjunction involved which, in the case of music, the artist may instinctively obscure but which in hauntological music, is highlighted and made a feature (Fisher 2013b: 43-44). Pop musicologists like Fisher developed a *sonic hauntology* which they assert is a kind of ‘nostalgia for lost futures’ - something I highlighted previously as a particularly British psytrance trait (Fisher 2013a: 27).

In psytrance there seems to be a need to balance flowing elements in the music whilst maintaining interest. The music must be interesting and have unexpected elements but also be regular enough to induce flow. What different people experience as psychedelic in psytrance will also explain subgenre preference and why certain subgenres are prevalent in

particular geographic locations. It is this sense of taking the ineffable transcendent experiences to gritty, dirty and debased places that I think characterises the British psytrance scene. When I asked Maryam what the difference is in her experience of international festivals and the parties she attends in London, she replied that international festivals are hosts to the “most dedicated psytrance people” who all seem to be well-defined characters in their way or dressing, behaviour and comportment - this is psytrance “distilled”. It is also generally warmer at these festivals than in the UK and people wear less clothing - she cites Ozora festival in Hungary as an example, with its “sunny, fluffy lifestyle” where people are generally slim and fit and there is not a great diversity away from that body type. In contrast she described London squat parties as “grittier”, “dirtier” and “fiery”.

I described in previous chapters a kind of schism between scene participants of spiritual and non-spiritual outlooks, which I think correlate with concepts of the transcendent body and the grotesque body. This is of course a blunt way of dividing people by their outlooks that belies a more complex array of identities within psytrance scenes, but I use it for the sake of simplifying my argument - and there is precedent for this idea in existing literature, most notably Botond Vitos’ work on Czech dark psy dance-floors (2010: 151-69). I also found some evidence to support this when I examined a word frequency cloud of psy-databases’ collected lyrics and song titles: there seemed to be more of a focus on God, spirituality and outer space in the non-British acts and more reference to inner space with an absence of god and spirituality in the British acts data (see Appendix A). I think one of the key ways in which a local scene and its music come to have their own particular flavour is through the particular mix of people in that scene and their outlook on a spectrum of spiritual/hippie to non-spiritual/non-hippie. In general, the more hippie and spiritual types there are in a scene, the more uplifting and melodic music seems to emerge from it. Where there are more people of a non-spiritual bent in a scene, darker, faster and more bass driven styles seem to emerge proportionately.

4.4 Conclusion

The important types of Englishness, as outlined by Cloonan, expressed in British psytrance seem to be ambivalence, hip big Englishness and non-articulated Englishness. Applying these types raises issues around the exclusion of minority groups but also indicates that through its diverse range of texts, psytrance provides opportunities to redefine notions of Britishness. Nostalgia has been historically very important to the national mind-set of the United Kingdom, but this often deteriorates into nationalism and revision of history to edit out problematic elements. Psytrance, being non-articulated and constructing its identity on the

extreme ends of a primitive - futuristic continuum, seems to avoid, for better or worse, having to tackle problematic aspects of national identity.

British psytrance music uses sacred music anaphones that are similar to instruments sounded with the breath. It also deploys squelchy, digestive system-like sounds and irreverent, subversive samples. Weird, trickster-ish characters lurk in the twisted haecceities of British psytrance and broken, grotesque bodies emerge from its mutilated speech samples. So, reverent, spiritual qualities are juxtaposed with profane ones, to jarring effect, in a kind of 'cosmic fart joke'. This reflects a kind of 'introspective Englishness' (or in this case, Britishness) of the type identified by Featherstone, which reveals the identity work that is ongoing in the UK and in the British psytrance scene. Britain seems less inclined, on the whole, towards finding spiritual meaning in psytrance and more inclined towards a transgressive and playful habitus of partying. This may go some way to explain why the London style is considered the most prominent or representative British psytrance style and why dark psy and forest styles are rapidly gaining popularity.

I want to close by making clear that the stand-out characteristics in UK psytrance described in this chapter are not entirely unique to UK produced music: many of these sounds and tropes occur in music from other regions of the world. They do appear prominently in UK produced music, however, as part of a constellation of traits, themselves not unique to the UK's music. It is the particular constellation of traits that a regional style has which I would argue makes it distinct from other regional styles.

Chapter 5: Peak

Psytrance's Sites of Experience

5.0 Introduction

Psytrance events are shared embodied experiences. As I explained in previous chapters, there is a particular kind of camaraderie that arises on the dance-floor called *communitas*, a concept found in the work of Victor Turner and used in much of the scholarly work on psytrance, particularly that of Graham St John (2008). The knowledge that others are sharing a similar embodied experience and have a shared purpose in aiming for a peak experience causes a spontaneous bond to form between those present. In today's modern, technologically connected society where people can feel physically disconnected from others - where perhaps there is even some fear of being in close proximity with a large group of people - *communitas* feels exceptional. The experience of being with people in a non-threatening scenario is therefore therapeutic for many people. The long length of parties and festivals means that people are able to come from disparate areas and backgrounds and experience not only transcendence but the mundane, messy reality of human bodies living at close quarters. Psychoactive substances like MDMA enhance *communitas*, increasing feelings of empathy for other people.

These collective embodied experiences take place in a variety of places and spaces. Having discussed in chapters 2-3 various aspects of the embodied experience in psytrance, and looked at the British scene and grotesque, debased psychedelic sensibilities in chapter 4, these experiences need situating in the spaces and places in which they occur. In this chapter I describe the most typical sites of psytrance experience, using ethnographic pieces resulting from participant observation at four different events in the UK. First, I introduce some concepts that I will use in my discussion of each site of experience.

Sound Studies is a field that brings together multiple definitions of sound from a number of disciplinary perspectives; scientific perspectives on sound including the physics of sound waves and the biological processes involved in hearing sound, the embodied phenomenology of sound and listening, the psychology of sound perception and reception, as well as historical and political contexts, issues of place and space and the meaning we ascribe to sound - among a great many other issues. It is also able to conceptualise sound as musical and non-musical, caused by a living or non-living thing and so on, without

needing to make a distinction between these - it looks at sound in relation to other actors in a network, much like Latour does in actor-network-theory (Latour 2005). The multiplicity of perspectives on sound found in sound studies makes it a very useful purview with which to tie together the various elements of this thesis and also look at the impact that space and place have upon the experience psytrance in the present chapter.

Acoustemology treats sound in a similar way to relational ontology, positing it as a way of knowing (See for instance Feld 1996). Relational ontology is about the connectedness of things and how we come to know things from repeated, ongoing interaction with other beings and the environment (Feld 2015: 15). This is something I have touched upon when looking at sound objects and virtuality in chapter 2 and in chapter 3, with Becker and Kapchan's descriptions of accessing special knowledge through trancing. In *Keywords in Sound Studies*, Kapchan describes the noisy process of childbirth and posits the body as a *sound body*, or *sounding body*, that even in its very formative moments is enveloped in and involved with sound (Kapchan in Novak and Sakakeeny 2015: 33). The sound body is material and resonates with its environment, 'conducting' sound. As Nancy describes it, sound is *methexic* which means it is to do with sharing, participation and contagion (Nancy and Mandell 2007: 10).

Kapchan (Kapchan in Novak and Sakakeeny 2015: 33) references Julia Kristeva (1982, 1984) and her concept of *chora*, where the participatory nature of sound, sound bodies resounding together, is linked to a plane of continuity where sounds exist, separate from the subject that caused them and belonging to everyone and no one. Kapchan also talks about *sound knowledge* as being transmitted through non-discursive means (ibid 2015: 33-44). Kapchan's description of sound knowledge is very similar to Feld's concept of acoustemology or "acoustic knowing", where sound plays an important role in how people understand their experiences (1996: 97). It also accords with Becker's descriptions of the "special gnosis" attained through trancing to music (2004: 2). These ways of thinking about sound and sounding bodies links together the phenomenological, embodied experience of psytrance and the transmission of cultural and stylistic knowledge that occurs in the sonic spaces and geographical places of psytrance culture.

Sound studies also considers the historicity of sound and sonic spaces. Hirschkind talks about the historical context of religion in colonial Europe, where religious life was conducted quietly and Europeans perceived non-Western religions as noisy and primitive in contrast (Hirschkind in Novak and Sakakeeny 2015: 165). Schmidt explores the religious versus secular contexts of sound in history and introduces the concept of 'auditory suspicion'. Technology like talking automatons encountered by people at funfairs provided an exciting,

fantastical alternative to the religious fundamentalist voices in America at the time, causing them to be suspicious of the extraordinary claims of the religious and ultimately assisting in a transition towards secularism (Schmidt 1998, Schmidt 2000). In a more recent example, Henriques describes the way in which the visceral basslines of DnB recall the history of reggae and dancehall in the West Indies and invokes the rich culture brought by immigrants from that region to the UK, affording it the authenticity and nostalgia of 'roots music' (Henriques 2003).

The meaning encoded in sound itself is also examined in sound studies: for instance, Henriques' writing on *sonic dominance* where he describes the penetrating, subjectivity destroying power of DnB basslines (Henriques 2003). The reach of sonic dominance is direct from the sound source to the sounding body because the bass is artificially enhanced, transcending physical space and seemingly everywhere and nowhere - the reverberation in the sounding bodies of listeners/dancers is inescapable, whether experienced as violence or sensual pleasure. This is an idea that Papenburg echoes in his discussion of the enhanced bass of boomboxes in the sound systems of 1970s night clubs (Papenburg 2016). As Binas-Preisendörfer notes, loudness stands for transgression and sonic self-assurance (Binas-Preisendörfer 2016: 261-69). Loudness in punk, for example, was a threatening symbol of solidarity and group identity directed towards 'outsiders'. Loudness can transcend volume to be represented in extremes of dress code, movement, speed, pitch and timbre. It can also represent environmental concerns and industry through 'noise' and noise pollution. Loudness can be a marker of a successful performance if it is a central feature of the music in question. These concepts - sonic dominance, enhanced bass and loudness - are applicable to all loud and/or bass-driven music, psytrance included.

Space in sound studies is considered in multiple ways, for example a phenomenological field (Merleau-Ponty 1945/1962), virtual space or acoustic ecology, and can be both a framework in which entities are placed - absolute space - or an effect of the relationship between entities - relational space (Novak and Sakakeeny 2015: 194). Where a boundary is formed, producing interiority and exteriority and separating public and private space, it can be described as territorialisation - a concept originating in the work of Deleuze and Guattari. Sound territorializes space with a combination of physical vibration, bodily sensation and cultural meaning (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, Novak and Sakakeeny 2015: 199). Georgina Born, quoting Connor, asserts that sound is not just something that is mediated, but has agency and the ability to reconfigure space (Connor 1997: 206, Born 2013: 3). Bennett and Driver meanwhile, state that the body has been discussed as a vessel for experiences in the different places and spaces of music scenes but criticize the lack of work on how the body

itself shapes music scenes, considering how bodies are absolutely central to scenes built around listening, dancing, musicking and affect (Bennett and Driver 2015). This thesis is in part a response to the gap in research they identify.

This chapter is based around four British psytrance events I attended and in each section I have tried to convey a sense of the space in which the party occurred and what it was like to experience that space. There are four ethnographic accounts, interspersed with analysis, covering a different kind of space and place, whether indoors, outdoors, licensed or squatted.

5.1 Outdoor Free Party: London Forest-style Party

A connection from the psytrance scene sends me a link to a Facebook event page advertising the party, with a link to buy tickets. The tickets are bought online fairly cheaply, but we have to travel by train to London, across the city by underground and bus and take a taxi to the party location, which altogether is about three times as expensive as the tickets themselves. The location is miles outside the London borough where we alight from the train. It is dark, around 10pm, and raining intermittently when we begin our journey out of London in the taxi. Buildings and other traffic become less frequent as we leave London and head into a more rural setting, but in the distance the M25 is visible, reminding us that it encapsulates this seemingly rural place. We are using Google maps and listening to directions on a party phone line in order to find the way to the location.

My friend and I are accompanied by a couple of people that we have just met and are sharing a taxi with to get there. One of the people travelling with us is due to help out by taking a shift on the gate that evening, checking tickets and giving out wristbands. I learn from them that the party is on private land belonging to someone who is sympathetic to the need for the party scene to have places for events where they will remain undisturbed. Being private, the event is legal, in the sense that there is a list of the names of all partygoers and they each have named tickets. These are important details as if the police turn up they will ask to see the list and evidence that everyone is accounted for and ticketed, otherwise they may shut the party down.

Eventually, Google maps indicates we are in the right place even though it is dark and there is no sign of a party. In any case, we get out of the taxi and it drives off. There is the faint thudding of music nearby but it's difficult to tell where the sound is coming from. We pick a direction based on the map on a smartphone and end up walking around for almost an hour and a half trying to find the party before we realise that we were looking at the map upside down on the phone. The camaraderie and excitement between friends old and new of

'missioning it' to the party has by that time evaporated somewhat, as we are a little cold, wet and tired by this point. We manage to flag down a taxi and head back in the other direction, eventually spotting the entrance to the property just a little further up the road from where the first taxi left us.

On entering the property we walk down a gravel driveway towards a farmhouse type property. There are two vehicles blocking the entrance to a narrow, darkened path lined with trees and stewards stood beside the vehicles ask to see our tickets, take our names and cross them off their list and affix a wristband on to each of our arms. We proceed down the dark path beyond and I hear a conversation between two people behind us about "how nice it is to get back to nature". I chuckle to myself a little, as while this certainly counts as 'nature' in comparison to the busy London borough twenty minutes' drive away, we are still enclosed by the M25 orbital motorway and we are near enough to civilisation to see and hear vehicles going across a flyover in the near distance. The dark path eventually leads to a gated field, at the opposite end of which we see a small patch of woodland with lights flickering between the tree trunks. The music is not very loud at this point as we walk through the long grass towards it. The ground is damp and little muddy as we traverse the field, it being late spring and it having rained intermittently during the day.

It is now around 11.30pm, half an hour past the time the party was advertised to begin and yet hardly anyone has arrived yet and there are still people setting up equipment and sound checking. We take in our surrounds: the main dance-floor is the first area we encounter as we enter the site and beyond this we can see that the site as a whole takes the shape of a shallow valley populated by tall and medium sized deciduous trees which are in full leaf, and a stream flowing through the middle. There are fairy lights hung between the branches of the trees around the clearing that constitutes the main dance-floor, which has been dug out by hand to form a level floor with 2-3 foot tall banks bounding it at one end. The main DJ booth is set up on one side of this, a basic metal structure around 12 feet tall and 8 feet wide which is open at the front and has a waterproof tarpaulin roof. The mixing desk is just visible from the dance-floor clearing and speaker stacks around 8 feet tall and 4 feet wide stand either side of the structure, protected by waterproof coverings.

There is a large black backdrop covering the back of the DJ booth with the name of the party organisers painted in large, vibrant, psychedelic lettering. A metal structure surrounds the front of the DJ booth, thin, criss-crossed metal beams form triangles with the overall shape of the structure forming an elongated hexagon, with its extremities reaching the furthest side of the speakers. Between the triangular shapes, coloured string is wound and stretched in precise patterns, creating a web-like effect. Painted, sail like pieces of fabric hang in the

trees surrounding the dance-floor, demarcating its bounds and offering partial shelter from the elements.

Following the path from the main stage a few meters ahead, a large campfire is burning. The path diverges here with one section continuing straight on to where I eventually learn the second stage is set up and one section leading left and downhill to the stream. A lot of care has been taken by the organisers to clear away undergrowth around the stream so that people can move across the site without mishap. Makeshift wooden bridges have been created across the stream and grates next to these to reduce the chance of slipping. A few more people have arrived and have started pitching tents around the dance-floor and around the edges of the site: though this is only advertised as a one-night party, the weather is changeable. I myself have a pop-up tent for this reason and because of a need for a private place of reflection.

Later, when we have recovered from our walk and the music is underway we emerge from the tent and survey the area from the top of the valley. There are perhaps 200-250 people in all. Fairy lights and decorations hang in the trees, wisps of fabric and painted fabric 'sails' stretched between tree trunks along with an area on our side of the valley, to our left, that has a large tarpaulin creating a large covered chill-out area. This, I am told, is not part of the organisers' set up but was brought along by well-prepared partygoers. There is a second stage on the opposite side of the valley to the left playing progressive and chill-out music - they also have someone doing a spoken word performance and a harpist advertised on the line-up. This little DJ booth is not covered. On the other side to our right is the main stage in between the two stages across the little rudimentary bridge, perhaps 30-40 people have congregated around the fire.

There are around 50-75 people on the dance-floor at any one time, grinning, talking and stomping. Dancing is a little contained and hunched over, probably due to the weather and people having their hoodies up against the cold. Movement generally consists of stepping from side to side or stomping the ground exultantly with a wide stance and ballistic arm movements added in from time to time in emphasis of the beat or towards the DJ to express appreciation of the music. People look at each other on the dance-floor, smiling and also up into the trees at the decorations. Sometimes a dancer turns around in a circular movement. As the night proceeds into the small hours, more people arrive. They know each other, greeting with hugs as they arrive and spot each other in the crowd of on the dance-floor. These are people who for the most part are regulars on the London party scene and may frequently go to an event like this in the outdoor party season. In fact, on hearing that my friend and I have travelled from Brighton in addition to coming across London to the location,

some people are surprised that we have travelled so far. It is much more costly if you do not already live in London to be a regular in this scene. Though the setting for these parties is a cosmopolitan city, people not in the locale are therefore perhaps excluded in an economic respect.

The ages of people there range from late teens to late forties as far as I can see, with the mainstay of the crowd in their twenties and thirties. The attendees seem evenly split in terms of gender of the partygoers, but all the DJs on the main stage appear to be male. I meet a girl who says that she's come over from mainland Europe within the last three months in her early twenties and I meet a group of German lads in their late teens and early twenties who arrived in the UK the previous day. Throughout the party, I see people of different ethnicities and I hear a number of different languages spoken. The style of people's dress tends to be practical - jeans, hoodies, coats etc. due to the conditions, but 'ethnic' fabrics and T-shirts with psychedelic designs. The odd wacky, jester-like hat in vivid colours can be seen, along with a few other anomalies, for instance a man in a smart, dark pinstripe suit and someone who has made an impromptu wig from the hay covering the dance floor area.

I talk to a man who looks to be in his late forties by the fire, who has been on the scene since its inception in the 1990s and before, on the beaches of Goa. He says that the music has changed a great deal, but the spirit of the parties is the same. Conversations at times between strangers can become very personal very quickly, perhaps due to the increased feeling of togetherness from being ensconced in this enclosed space, assisted by various chemical technics which encourage *communitas*. Substances are taken openly: people pass around spliffs as we sit by the fire and I see some young lads cut up some powder and snort it. People also have cans and bottles of alcohol and there is someone filling balloons from a large canister of nitrous oxide, so at any given time at the party there are a number of people holding balloons. There are no toilets as far as I am aware and so it is necessary to climb up into the wooded sides of the valley for privacy.

The music is fast paced, weird, disconcerting, highly experimental and enjoyable. It seems to revel in its darkness, playing at fear and horror. People dance jubilantly, smiles on their faces and hands in the air, driven through the night by the beat with seemingly boundless energy. I feel there is a little incongruity between the music and this 'English fairy woodland' setting. Then again, as the night draws on and it begins to rain in earnest, the music seems more and more appropriate, reflecting the dark, inhospitable nature of our surroundings and the struggle to continue revelling despite the forces of nature acting upon us. At some point during the evening, the second stage is shut down as it is too muddy for anybody to stand in front of the stage and no protection from the rain - the harpist and spoken words performer's

sets are called off for the same reason. Eventually, we retreat to my tent and the rain increases in earnest. People are still on the dance-floor and sheltering in tents around the dance-floor, so the weather does not put a damper on the party. We re-pitch our tent underneath the large tarpaulin to our left for an extra layer of protection against the elements.

When I emerge from my tent it is daylight and I see most people are on and around the dance-floor, exultant at the change in conditions: the weather has dried up and sunlight is streaming through the trees. It is time for my friend and me to leave as we must catch a specific train, and we do so with a small number of other people making their way back into the city. Boarding the rural bus with my tent, covered in mud, exchanging looks with local people going about their day, is a jarring experience after being in the small world of the party - like having been in the womb and then birthed into the harshness of the world. I later learn that the party, which began on a Friday night, went on until Sunday afternoon and feel some disappointment that we had to leave because of financial constraints and work responsibilities. I also see online that the organisers have congratulated partygoers for adhering to principles of leaving no trace, in other words taking all their rubbish with them and cleaning up the site post party. Overall I come away feeling relaxed, though tired, and a sense of quiet satisfaction and excitement at having been initiated into this particular corner of psytrance culture.

The setting of the forest party is about escape and transformation, being as it is outside of the city and promising an opportunity to 'recharge in nature'. Having said that, it is not actually in nature per se, as civilization is nearby and tangible in the form of the busy road and the London borough a relatively short drive away. The location is 'wild' to the same extent which it is transgressive - the sonic space and physical terrain enclose partygoers so that it is easy to imagine one is far away from civilisation and that this is truly a 'free party' in the sense of being impromptu, free of charge and free of constraints on numbers and vetting at the entrance. However, calling it a 'forest party', as well as signalling what genre of music will be heard, gave this small wooded space within reach of the busy city the authenticity of a bona fide forest wilderness. Indeed, although I will not reveal it in order to protect the anonymity of the organisers, the name was a mock-serious play on the concept of 'forest', with ecological overtones and the banner on the online event page was a representation of the Green Man of English folklore. In addition, the by-line of the event was 'the way it used to be', so the event organisers drew in their crowd with a sense of nostalgia.

The subgenre of forest psytrance is fairly niche although it is becoming increasingly popular. It is quite a contested genre in psytrance given that it is fast and dark and revels in tensions,

fear and madness, where many psytrance scene participants prefer more upbeat and melodic psytrance styles as this allows them to have an uplifting psychedelic experience. The sonic space created in the small wood carries a historicity of past outdoor raves in the British free party scene that have taken place for the last 30 years or so, not to mention the countless parties that have taken place in mainland Europe in the wilderness proper and in forests of some considerable size. The place recalls the magic and mythology of Britain, teeming with supernatural entities and other superstitions which haunted the natural world in times past.

The tents set up around the dance floor and elsewhere on the site invoke ancient small-scale societies or a tribal past, where rhythmic music and *communitas* around the fire within the magical setting of the wood may have been more commonplace. The shape of the physical space created by trees and their canopies, the fence bounding the adjacent fields and the valley shape with the stream bisecting it lengthways is almost cathedral-like: although the sonic space is outdoors an interiority is formed. The sheer speed, volume and darkness of mood in forest style psytrance creates intensity in an outdoor space. Indoor parties automatically have this intensity because of the volume of music within an enclosed space, the directness of communication to listeners/dancers and the inescapable nature of the sound, so it seems as if this particular intense genre of music provides this intensity in an outdoor setting where it might otherwise be lacking. Faster music may indeed be a necessity in an outdoor setting: an interview participant suggested to me that very fast music was considered inappropriate for an indoor setting as it is too intense, but ideal for a wooded setting where sound waves dissipate rather than bouncing off walls. This reminds me of what is often said of acid trips, that an indoor experience may be too sensorially overwhelming, with walls, ceilings and objects all in relatively short range and providing stimulus to the trip. LSD also amplifies experience generally, so an indoor trip experience might be one where the sense of being enclosed intensifies to an extent that feels oppressive or claustrophobic. In contrast, the outdoor setting gives more space and distance between visual stimuli, and amplifies the sense of the largeness of nature and the smallness of the body, which becomes profound to the tripper. The sonic dominance of the music within this cathedral-like setting gives a kind of spiritual and transcendent feeling, but a wild and transgressive kind so that there is an “intertwining of light and dark” (O’Grady 2012) and an increased awareness of the difference between the two, which gives rise to a very particular liminal space. If the wood were a church it would be a pagan one, where arcane ceremonies take place, combining the material and embodied with the ethereal and transcendent.

The idea of the *sacred circle* is appropriate to this party: O'Grady borrows this term from theatre director Gary Izzo, and explains it as a protective boundary which shields the partygoers from the outside world whilst they engage in their psychedelic experience (2012). The sacred circle of this forest party consists of a combination of sonic and extra sonic factors: this is private land, with ticketing in advance, wristbands, people on the gate with vehicles blocking the access road and so on. There are also economic and knowledge aspects that restrict access: the ticket costs money, as does travel to get there and partygoers need to be in the know about the location by following forum posts, social media groups and event pages online and by calling a secret party line just before the event. In this sense, the sacred circle both protects those within its bounds and their activities, but also excludes those without economic means or insider knowledge.

The almost cosseted feel of being on private land, and therefore acting within the law in many respects, takes away from some of the authenticity that comes from association with UK underground party scene history and also reduces some of the thrill that comes with the risk of attending an illegal gathering. However, the insight and knowledge needed to access the party and the secrecy, until the last minute, of the location do counteract this somewhat. There is also a little more risk associated with this kind of location compared with an inner city party because of the distance from services should there be an emergency. The muddy terrain of the site carries some risk as it is not easy to negotiate in the dark, but the exertion of partygoers in these conditions makes them more aware of their embodiment and contributes to a visceral and grounded psychedelic experience. Overall there is orderly behaviour (probably in part because of the need for care in negotiating the site) and everybody is cogent of the rules, for example there is no aggression displayed or harassment of women and people seek privacy if they need to urinate.

There are more variables in the acoustic ecology with an outdoor event - you have factors like wind strength and direction, rain, the sound of vehicles on the road etc. A territory is created with sound, creating an interior and exterior but the music is loud enough that it can be heard on approach through the fields and so the territory bleeds into the real world, extending its bounds, but the world also bleeds into the sonic space. The fact that the music can be heard outside the bounds of the party gives a sense of it asserting its authority into the distance and inviting those at a distance to join in the event. The space is more relational than absolute, as it is more about the entities within it and the connections between them: the bodies, the trees, the stream and all the other features of sensory modalities. Here the bodies and relationships between them actively shape the space, gathering in particular areas, moving across the terrain, sitting or dancing, or retiring to the edges of the physical

space to rest. Bodies have shaped the space in a very practical sense in preparing for the party by clearing ferns and bushes, digging earth to create level ground, creating bridges over the stream, hanging backdrops and lights and erecting tents against the weather.

5.2 Indoor Free Party: London Squat Party

I hear of the event through acquaintances and a friend agrees to accompany me. We travel from Brighton by coach and then by underground and over-ground train, meeting friends at a major train station in London. Someone calls the party line for directions and we set off walking. We are walking for around an hour or so around an industrial area of London where the streets are quiet. Along the way a couple of people who are dressed in psytrance-freak attire ask us if we are also looking for the party and join us on our mission. We are not quite certain if we are following the directions correctly and listen for the tell-tale thud of the bass. Eventually we detect a faint pulsing sound and looking at the map on a smartphone, decide that the party must be just down the road. Eventually, we arrive at the location: it's 11.30pm. We are near to the river, under a rail bridge in a partially industrialised and partially inhabited area, which strikes me as the perfect liminal space. A side alley just before the bridge leads us to the door of a warehouse, where people are queuing to get in. Friendly security guards briefly search our bags for weapons and we pay £10 on the door for entry and have the back of our hands stamped with ink. Inside there is a large space which is playing chill-out music and further in there are two smaller rooms playing different flavours of psybreaks. The decor in the furthest room, where I spend most of the party, is a swathe of canvas art running round all four walls on which are painted abstract forms, suggesting interwoven Celtic dragons in warm orange shades. The DJs are using CDJs and vinyl turntables, skilfully mixing retro sounds, possibly soul or Motown tracks into a break-laden psychedelic trance, melding old and new.

The dancing in the main rooms is bouncy, the music being slow enough and syncopated to allow for breadth of movement and lateral movement. There is a curvy, funky, pendulum-like equilibrium in movement, with some sharp, ballistic movements, especially in the arms and hands. There is a slightly hunched over comportment, similar to Joanna Hall's description of dancing in DnB club culture (2009: 182). The vibe is uplifting and the crowd mainly face the DJ, sometimes motioning towards them with a whoop of appreciation. People smile at each other on the dance-floor and close their eyes, deeply channelling the warmth of the vibrations. The space feels safe, as does the crowd: I feel more relaxed as the night progresses and this is reflected in the way my dancing becomes more expressive and creative as the party goes on.

I go with my group of friends to sit in the larger chill-out space near the entrance. It is early in the morning and this room is the only one with windows, so as the sun comes up the magical sheen of the party is counteracted somewhat by the grey concrete floor and brick wall interior and the old carpets that we are sitting on as they become visible in the morning light. We are rocking gently to the music and conversation is sparse. People pass around spliffs, starting to feel a little tired. The grime and dust of the surroundings has become more apparent, but the part of me that would normally care about these things is absent. I feel there is a second lesson from this experience, that as long as I am at peace in my body, I could be comfortable even in the least comfortable situations. The group I sit with are dressed in psy-freak attire: vibrant colours or muted, naturally dyed fabrics, 'ethnic' fabrics, dreadlocked hair, piercings, some gender queer clothing styles, faces painted with glitter, stick-on jewels or swirls, utility belts and bags with many small pockets. It is a kind of shabby and eclectic appearance which fits with our surrounds and one which, conveniently, enhanced by a bit of grime and dust. I notice other people whose aesthetic looks a little incongruous with the surroundings; for instance, a lady wearing a smart pea coat sits on her own, looking like a young professional who has chanced upon the party but is probably not a regular on the scene.

Around 7 or 8 o'clock in the morning as we sit in this room, someone touches my arm and points out that the police have arrived. No one seems very concerned. I look around and several officers come in and walk through the space in a non-confrontational way. They walk into the main room, likely looking for the organisers to shut down the sound system. We stay where we are, and people feel comfortable enough to continue smoking their spliffs. Ten minutes later, the music is stopped and the officers are back, asking people to leave the building. My friends and I are the first to go out the door and as we walk into the alley, we see it has been blocked off by more police officers at the entrance. We see several police vans parked just outside the gated entrance to the alley and there are perhaps twenty or so officers standing around. People file out of the party and queue behind us in a typically English fashion and we wait there for around fifteen minutes before they begin processing us, during which time I can plainly see people surreptitiously dropping 'baggies' and other items, presumably psychoactive substances, and treading them into the dirt. I also see people hiding things on their person. The police are stood waiting, almost as if they are giving time for this process to happen. There are hundreds of partygoers and so I suppose the police are loath to spend time arresting and processing so many people for possession. Eventually my friend and I are taken out of the queue, out of the gate and off to one side to be patted down by a policewoman after which we are free to leave. It is the same outcome

for most partygoers, with only one or two carted away for possession of psychoactive substances- presumably those who did not bother to hide their stash as they felt lulled into a false sense of security or who were too intoxicated to think about hiding their supplies in preparation for being searched.

Following the party, I hear that the organisers were evicted from the premises without being given the opportunity to clean up, something which they were prepared to do in any event and were upset about being prevented from doing as they would give the party scene a bad reputation or even be held liable for criminal damage. It occurs to me that this may be a clever, intentional tactic of the authorities, to put people off organising squat parties without the use of brute force. The situation was a little stressful, but in my role as participant observer I had nothing to worry about with the police searching me, it was simply jarring to come from a place of warmth and safety, suddenly into the harsh brightness of the morning and real-life, the police in their crisp uniforms and bright white vans processing us like cattle and putting their hands on our bodies. It was an unfortunate end to the party but an experience that in terms of my research I was glad to have gone through, as for regular partygoers this is no doubt something that they have experienced more than once.

The squat party has a great deal of cultural capital which comes from the historicity of sonic space created inside the building. A grubby, industrial space, under a bridge, next to the river, it is a truly liminal space and one that invokes the history of the underground party scene in the UK specifically of rave scene of the 1990s. There tends to be more authenticity attached to urban spaces in general when it comes to music scenes (Connell and Gibson 2003: 203). This is an absolute space in that it is enclosed physically by building, but this also serves to concentrate the resounding bodies inside, forcing them into interaction within a restricted area so that there is also a strong sense of relational space. This works together with the sonic dominance in terms of volume of the music and the intense sub-bass, to create a sonic hyperreality - a domain which incorporates the real and the virtual so the two become indistinguishable from each other. The music is inescapable and resonates the body strongly: participants have no choice but to engage in corporeal listening just on the edge of bearability. There is direct communication between the musical sounds and the resounding bodies which overwhelms the subject and also grounds participants firmly in the body, reminding them of multiple connections with their body and with other bodies in the space. This sonic dominance is also punk-like in its assertiveness and creation of solidarity. Noise becomes an identity, redolent of the city in terms of noise pollution - and there is plenty of loudness in other sensory modes, for example people's dress code and the décor, whose

warm orange shades permeate the space, and also the grotesque presence of the fat bass sound.

There is very open psychoactive substance use and a younger age range than at the other events described in this chapter. There are two rooms both playing psybreaks and another room that is more ambient and chilled out. The sounding bodies are thrown together and debased and intense sensation of bodily connectedness that comes from a lack of self-consciousness in combination with sonic dominance, for instance, there is only one toilet and an outdoor, inner courtyard becomes the de facto toilet as the party progresses and people lose their inhibitions about using it as such. The squat scenario is transient, impermanent and through this has a sense of freedom. The city setting is also more anonymous than other settings, being industrial, being a grey, blank space inside for the pop-up psy milieu to pass through: it is a nowhere. It is also a *nowhen* (Certeau 1984: 93-94): without the benefit of windows in the inner rooms, participants lose track of time but the party is also a temporarily opened portal to the timeless, supra-individual domain of psytrance, a vantage point across time and space. As with the forest party, there is a sacred circle of protection in the building itself, the security on the way into the building who are checking for weapons and psychoactive substances and in a sense, not being able to tell the time is a mental protection for the psychedelic experience of partygoers, allowing them to maintain a liminal mind-set.

Having to pay for a ticket obviously excludes some people on an economic basis but in general, this event was the most accessible and inclusive of them. This means there is less vetting to make it into the party so there is a risk of disorderly behaviour, and the presence of outsiders who are not particularly into this genre of music but looking for an underground party of any kind - psychoactive substance dealers or gangs, for instance. However, behaviour here is orderly in terms of people's interaction with each-other and friendly, though with open and visible psychoactive substance use.

The psybreaks subgenre is a slower style of psytrance which borrows from its source material a sonic historicity that includes the music of the Black Atlantic diaspora (Gilroy 1993) in this multicultural city. It also inherits the groove of all the musical traditions this encapsulates. The use of vinyl very skilfully by one of the DJs adds to this authenticity and credibility. The enclosed boundaries of space are eventually trespassed by the police who come inside the building, highlighting the political tension of this kind of space and the challenge it offers to dominant power relations. That people continue to smoke their spliffs even as the police enter the building, speaks to the sense of protectiveness that the sacred circle has afforded. The sonic space has exceeded its bounds because as the morning

progresses, the sound of the bass was evident to people working in a nearby dogs and cats home who called the police to break up the party. The Internet and secrecy surrounding the location of the party is very important to the authenticity of the event - implicit in this is the understanding the police may turn up the party and shut it down, however, this is part of the appeal of the event. There is a vibe similar to the 'Reclaim the Streets' kind of political stance against capitalism and privatisation of public space. This event is about transformation through transgression and the transcendence comes from the actions of the bodies inside. It is intense, intimate trip one that is debased, grounding and an equaliser of people, bringing them down to their common and animal origins and thus reminding them of their humanity and their interconnectedness.

5.3 Club Night: Freak Bazaar Club Night, the Volks, Brighton

Arriving at dusk, the music can be heard before the club comes into view giving the impression of the dance floor over-spilling, its surroundings enveloped within the semipermeable membrane of its boundaries. Passing Brighton pier, resplendent with gaudy lights and the towering and pristine Brighton Wheel, one walks below the promenade, the beach and darkened sea within a few meters of the opposite side of the road. Rounding the corner the club comes into view, built beneath the promenade, it is set into the rocky sea defence so that its entrance appears as if the mouth of a cave, 'firelight' flickering inside from the dance floor just within. The doors to the club are still open with a view onto the beach and the sea beyond and people are gathered outside the glowing entrance to the dance floor.

The club functions during the day as a bar and café serving food and hot drinks, but takes on a different character when psytrance parties take place there at night, through the juxtaposition of small, circular tables on the paved area outside, connoting European café culture and the patrons in deconstructed *Mad Max* style attire. Passers-by stop to look at the freaky café culture crew gathered outside around small circular tables, between the supporting columns of the promenade above, laughing, drinking, smoking and dancing. A couple and their child on an evening walk stop on the periphery of the 'café' to join in dancing to the digital heartbeat emanating from within the decorated cave, the entrance of which shines with coloured light, interrupted by future-primitive, dancing silhouettes.

Entering the glowing cave, one steps immediately onto the dance floor and is at once immersed in the warmth of the bass and dancing bodies. The DJ stands opposite the open doors on the 'stage', which is level with the dance floor, bobbing around in time with the crowd. A barrier separates the dancers from the glowing CDJs, mixing desks and laptops

behind. An azure backdrop behind the DJ depicts Shiva, who serenely oversees proceedings, lasers punctuating his form and painting a translucent, restless band over the eyes of the DJ.

The hypnotic beat entrances, the reverberations felt deep in the chest, entraining the heart to synchronise with it. Whilst visceral body sensations are experienced, disembodied voices hoot digitally modified syllables into the space. Alien snippets of sound hove into view and whizz past with a Doppler effect; strange atmospheric sweeps well up around the feet and metallic particles 'ping-pong' around the space, spiralling away in different directions. Sirens call from the far distance as one is driven forward through the swirling, ethereal tunnel, their ghostly howls echoing down its inner perimeters. The mix dictates the feeling of space: when the end of the tunnel is reached one bursts into a vast expanse, flying above a plateau, thrown inexorably forward. The urgency and intensity deepen, persist and increase in ceaseless climax.

Musical gestures influence the movement of bodies. When the beat is syncopated the dancers bounce with ecstatic abandon, when slightly menacing minor 2nds encroach their hand gestures sharpen, when a straight, driving pulse kicks in their postures become strong, defiant and they stomp and beat time with a fist. The crowd look to be aged from mid-twenties to middle-aged, perhaps a sign of the longevity of the scene and the psychedelic heritage it shares with other scenes, allowing individuals to seamlessly osmose into the permeations of psychedelic culture which arise over the decades. A man looking to be in his sixties emerges from the crowd, bald head and purple goatee shining in the UV and laser light.

A breakdown, the beat abruptly retreats leaving shimmering glissandi behind. The crowd stop bouncing, some looking self-conscious, others expectant and some floating blissfully with closed eyes in the sonic space created, their hands forming representations of the swirling patterns in their mind's eye. Atmospheric sound builds and the beat drops; the crowd bursts into movement as one, with renewed vigour.

Time seems dilated as a liminal realm arises, transcending the bounds of the cramped, post-apocalyptic bunker-like Volks, with its dank corners and camouflage netting. Those characteristics are also embraced in the timeless, autonomous zone, referencing squat parties, the early rave scene, getting down and dirty within reclaimed industrial ruins. The realm somehow encompasses futurist, utopian visions and primitive nostalgia; contains the universe and yet feels womb-like. Dionysian abandon in the crowd is contrasted with those who are quietly, meditatively contemplating the music from the edges of the dance floor and

the conscientious, organised behaviour of the DJs and promoters who adhere to the set times and the surly bouncers who ensure the event runs smoothly.

The doors to the outside begin to close and the crowd fills the empty spaces on the dance floor; whirling dervishes begin to contain their movements to accommodate more dancers. Modern-primitive, dreaded figures, a woman with a shock of purple, post-punk hair, guys with cosmic, sacred geometry designs emblazoned on their T-Shirts, individuals with an aesthetic drawn more from the cultural mainstream who are freaks in behaviour rather than appearance - they seem representative of any person who has ever danced and will ever dance. All are pressed shoulder to shoulder, a hot mess, a carnivalesque conglomeration of mischievous faces. The beat stops abruptly, revealing gated, fractionated sounds which smatter points of light, evoking stars. The refined British voice from a 1960s B-movie asks: "Do you not realise...we are on another planet?"

The Volks is a licensed club and therefore lacks some of the authenticity attached to the historicity of the British underground party scene. It is a little dirty, dilapidated and smelly, however, so does retain a somewhat underground feel. In addition, it is well known for hosting niche subgenre nights like DnB, techno and jungle. The security seem more concerned with keeping the peace than policing psychoactive substance taking, as long as people do not make it obvious enough otherwise they have to act to protect the club's licence. There is some restricted access due to economic considerations but the tickets to get in are typical for a party at £7-10. A disadvantage to the central, urban setting is that scene outsiders who happen to be looking for any club night decide to come in and do not know the rules, the culturally appropriate way of behaving. For instance, men will sometimes approach and harass women, not understanding that this is a largely platonic setting, that people do not come here to 'pull' in the same way that happens in the mainstream clubs just the other side of the Palace Pier.

The space is an absolute space, but transitions from a liminal outdoor/indoor setup to an enclosed space, first of all relating the body to the world outside, the city and to nature in the form of the sea and then concentrates bodies into an enclosed space, grounding with proximity, sweat and physical interaction into their bodies and giving a sense of connectedness with each other. The spatial fixity of this location and frequency of events that take place here mean that it lacks some of the feeling of freedom of other locations that comes from their impermanence. A sense of freedom and connectedness arises from the real and imagined transnational community though, represented here by the presence of many long-time immigrants to the UK. There is a critical mass of fans and musicians in Brighton that keep the scene maintained. Freak Bazaar tends to hold label nights and this is

one, on this particular night having a combination of London style sounds and Goa influences. On these label nights, styles are reinforced and showcased. Different tastes and identities are catered for with the addition of a second room downstairs with more progressive and ambient beats that allow for breadth in movement when dancing. In the main room when the doors are open, people dance with breadth and creativity, using their whole body, traversing the dance-floor and not necessarily facing the DJ. They have a laid-back comportment with a wide stance, using their arms and sweeping and complex flows. When the doors are closed space becomes more cramped and movement becomes more contained and vertical. Dancing becomes more about the lower body and the feet and is less mobile across the space. Pressed together, the collective movement becomes bouncy and faces forward towards the DJ for the main part, although people, particularly right at the front, to turn to look at each other and smile.

Once the doors are closed and the dance-floor is contained, there is a direct communication and reception of the music so that the sonic dominance intensifies the collective trip. The sound reconfigures the cramped space in to something with depth and breadth and people relish dancing next to the speakers to feel the full force of the subjectivity-destroying bass. Loudness express itself in people's flamboyant dress and in the grotesque, fat beats of the music and there is a punk-like assertion of dominance - particularly when the doors are open - about being visible in the city setting. You can hear the club on approach so that the enclosed boundaries are actually porous and there is a sense of defiance in the volume. Having said this, activity like psychoactive substance use is covert, as is necessary to remain within the building and there is a sense of having to behave and reign in one's behaviour because of these restrictions. The bouncers here are formidable and often stand next to the dance-floor so there is a constant awareness of being in a space mediated by laws and authorities. The lack of authenticity of a licensed club setting is offset by the decor and the other audio-visual elements which connect through time and space to global psytrance culture and history.

5.4 Festival: Noisily Festival, UK

Noisily Festival of Electronic Music and Arts is held in rural Leicestershire in a wooded valley and its hilly, surrounding fields. The organisers advertise it as "...fun in all its forms, pure and unadulterated. Offering an alternative to mainstream festival culture, an inclusive haven where underground music thrives and self-expression flourishes".¹⁹ Progressive Techno is

¹⁹ <http://www.noisilyfestival.com/ethos/> accessed 20/06/18. When I first accessed the site two years ago the text read "...creating a safe haven where hedonism and escapism can flourish and thrive". It

the main genre on offer along with the Liquid stage, which is devoted to psytrance. Two main stages and several small stages offer Bass, Glitch and Breaks, House and Disco.

A three day, weekend event taking place in July, it has been running since 2012 and has gone from selling around 2000 to around 4000 tickets in that time, so it is still a medium sized festival in terms of the UK, but has become well known for providing quality underground music and psychedelic experience. I paid £95 for a ticket at the time that I went, a price that has steadily increased since then, and it was still fairly small at around 3000 people with a lot of familiar faces from the psytrance scene, mainly there for the Liquid stage. Being fairly small it perhaps retains a greater sense of community than some of the larger festivals in the UK. The festival is in a very traditional English setting: a manor house and its estate, Noseley Hall. The stages are amid the trees in the Coney Woods, a wooded valley, and the camping area is in the fields above this. The construction of the stages, the food stalls and signage is all untreated wood from the estate itself, giving a natural and organic feel, whilst hay and wood chips are used throughout the stage areas and in between to counteract the mud.

Walking around the site, there are unexpected aesthetic elements: a bus stop, a UFO and a giant boom box, for example. Liquid stage is the furthest area from the campsite and the deepest into the wood, creating a very specific sense of place. The bulk of the audience are around the two largest stages, where it also seems that the crowd is in general a bit younger, mainly in their twenties, some in their thirties. There seems to be a pretty even mix of male and female festivalgoers, but the majority of the acts playing the festival are male. The Liquid stage has a consistently large crowd around it for the entirety of the festival, with hundreds of people on the dance-floor and sitting in areas around it. There is plenty of space and some people dance with enthusiasm and abandon, mainly facing the stage and the DJs, but also into the crowd, heads raised, smiling at each other or eyes closed and blissed out. Movement mainly consists of either gentle bouncing from side to side or a wider stance stomping dance, with floating or stabbing hand gestures and with some of the women traversing the space and reeling around. The decor consists of sail-like pieces of fabric stretched between tree branches above in a network of shapes that resemble leaves and flowers, which at night become a colourful, glowing canopy, like a futuristic, synthetic, English garden.

is interesting that 'hedonism' and 'escapism' have been replaced by a narrative of fun balanced with social and environmental consciousness.

The space is in a sense demarcated by the decor, but unlike the other stages there is no physical boundary to the dancers' bodies other than the trees surrounding the dance-floor and the path which accesses the other stages and the food area. The other bigger stages are less gaudily decorated, with more of a wooden structure surrounding the space, taking the shape of a rectangle. There seems to be a wide age range of people around the liquid stage, and almost everybody there is dressed typical psytrance attire, or at least a hippie aesthetic of some kind. In contrast, festivalgoers around the other stages are dressed in a wider array of styles, for example smart/casual shirts and shorts, slogan T-shirts and elements of fancy dress: wizard-like facial hair, *Mad Max*-style clothing, a strange costume with severed heads of 'Carebears' with disconcerting LED eyes, lederhosen, fairy wings and unicorn headdresses. Throughout the weekend on the liquid stage there are a variety of flow artists, using fire poi and hoops, something which I do not see happening on the other stages.

In the performance area of the festival, people choose the genre and location where they feel most comfortable and which suits their musical taste, but everyone is thrown together in a fairly cramped camping situation in the field above. People with live-in vehicles camped at the back, top of the field, and these are mainly older hippie types. Elsewhere in the campsite however, people from a variety of ages and EDM cultures are thrown together in close proximity. Different age bands of people seem to have their own corresponding routines, for example: in the morning on Saturday, more of the older crowd were dancing, perhaps because they slept on the Friday night and all the young people stayed up all night and were presumably very intoxicated and back in their tents. I saw quite a few older people on the campsite later that day; the younger crowd had by then headed to the performance area.

The music is relentless all weekend and the lack of sleep is likely to trigger a psychedelic experience as much as any chemical consumed. The sound from three larger stages bleeds together - meaning that the stages' different sonic reaches overlap and mingle, competing with each-other for your ear along with whatever is being played on the campsite by festivalgoers. The jumbled sound spaces at a distance become tonally unstable, shifting, dissonant and disconcerting. The effect reminds me of a dark but epic sci-fi soundtrack or a Hieronymus Bosch-style vision of hell, where impish demons shriek and distended voices coalesce into an infernal chorus. It is the sound of madness, which is fitting in a place where play, nonsense and mind-bending activities are the order of the day.

One of the key moments for me in contrast to this, was on the main dance-floor dancing to progressive techno. You cannot escape the bass throughout the whole site, it is visceral vibrating in your body and through the ground, even beyond the bounds of the camping

area. This bass was different, a giant sphere of warmth emanating towards me, which I embrace into my body with my arm movements. It was a soothing, healing experience, grounded in my body and yet transcendent - and for me the highpoint and transformational moment of the festival that even now, a few years later, I can recall in a kind of bodily, physical memory. Sonic dominance brings the intense pleasure of sound and indeed, the penetrating, warm bass felt soothing and therapeutic to my body, but I later reflected that on the environmental impact of the sound, terraforming and dancefloor stomping on this little piece of English woodland.

On the last day of the festival, a lot of people seem to pack up and leave early, and I wondered if this was for work or childcare commitments: I could feel the outside world beginning to encroach. The music became, to my ears, much more uplifting in its final hour, though signalling we were nearing the end of the event; I could hear plagal cadences with spiritual overtones and the music became like an epic, celebratory soundtrack for the site, in all its natural magnificence and human adornment.

Noisily is full of contradictions in terms of class and politics. It takes place in the quintessentially English countryside estate of a stately home and so is an anti-establishment event taking place on a site that represents the establishment. There is some political tension because it is often very uncertain whether festivals like this will happen as they often are shut down over licence and economic issues with little to no warning, so the fact that it is actually taking place and that people have been building up tension and excitement beforehand it gives it a particular exuberance and defiant attitude.

There was little to no spiritual symbolism in the décor in the year I attended and organisers themselves did not mention spirituality in their marketing, instead focussing on hedonism, escapism and creativity. More recent marketing mentions spirituality, mindfulness and an opportunity to escape the materialism of modern society. The ethos of the festival has clearly evolved but I wonder whether the reason for the change in tone is to avoid possible issues with the local authorities. The website does also say that the festival is a celebration of psychedelic culture however, so still acknowledges the presence of psychoactive substances at the event. The musical and extra-musical technics of the event offer an alternative voice to the spiritual narrative often heard within this setting in psytrance, indicating an attempt to appeal to a wider EDM audience.

Bodies have shaped the space: a five-person team clear and construct the entire site which takes 20 hours per day over three weeks. They build wooden structures for food outlets, pieces of artwork, signage, clear undergrowth and place down grates in areas where there

will be a lot of footfall in order to make the place safe for partygoers. The festival draws on a real and imagined transnational community, not least because it is a demonstration of the British party and club scene that draws people from other countries and showcases British music, along with hosting internationally renowned artists to contribute cultural capital to the event.

5.5 Indoors/Outdoors

Indoor dance spaces have specific effects on the bodies within them. In the UK parties are often had indoors due to the changeable and cool climate - this was a recurring theme in my interviews, the notion of Britishness conveyed by 'a nice cosy cup of tea and sit down' and perhaps more centred on the chill-out smoking area than the main dance-floor. As a participant put it, "where can you go and get a nice cup of tea and a piece of cake but a UK festival or party?" There seems to be more of a culture built around after parties than in other countries. Ad Simeon believes this is down to psytrance in the UK growing before the introduction of late licensing and people wanting to continue the party at a person's house after the club closed. The lack of space would lead to a mostly seated psychedelic experience with the ability to engage in conversation due to the music being quieter and access to comforts like hot drinks. As Ad Simeon points out "it's too hot at foreign festivals to enjoy a cuppa and they are more about health drinks anyway, smoothies and Acai et cetera, they don't really do Tea".

Indoor club parties are faced with a number of challenges to make space conducive to psychedelic experience - psytrance is intended to be heard outside, this is the ideal setting. There is a dialogic relationship in the practical and artistic set up of outdoor and indoor party spaces. Indoor club spaces typically feel as if one is outside, the ideal psytrance party setting, because the walls and ceiling are blacked out with fabric before decorating with psychedelic elements, creating the illusion of being under the night sky. Stretch fabric is often deployed at different angles to obscure corners and 'round off' the sharpness of the room, or to create a false perspective by implying a vanishing point: these techniques make the boundaries of the club less distinct. The transformation of the space is palpable and the emphasis on transformation can only intensify the transformation of the people in the space. Conversely, the same stretch fabric is used outside, between trees or poles for example, and though it doesn't provide any shelter from bad weather, creates the feel of a sheltered space by enclosing the dance-floor or other area of the party, providing a second, lower canopy under the canopy of trees.

The enclosure of dance-floor spaces and party spaces described in the above paragraph is spheropoiesis, the creation of macrospheres modelled on intimate biological and psychological microspheres, for example the mother's womb. I mentioned in chapter 2 in the section about space that psytrance music is a kind of microsphere, a virtual enclosed space modelled on internal psychological space. This is an example of a microsphere which has been mapped on to the next order of sphere size, transferring the safe, inner psychological state represented in the music into the outside world (Lemmens 2015).

There are also boundaries to the experience that come as a result of this being a corporate, licensed environment. These are invisible boundaries to do with behaviour, such as not taking psychoactive substances openly, dancing in the correct space, smoking outside or not displaying overly boisterous behaviour so as to draw attention from door staff. Then there are boundaries common to most psytrance events wherever they are; not attempting to dance with someone as an overture to a sexual encounter, facing towards the DJ (something which is a hotly contested issue, as I mentioned earlier) and the general policing of the vibe - not doing or saying anything that would jeopardise the positive, celebratory atmosphere - again something that is a matter of contestation between people in the scene.

Of course when parties are inside there is a limited amount of space and people's bodies are thrown together in close proximity which can increase the feeling of unity, camaraderie and community, but can also be restrictive in terms of dancing. A packed dance-floor may even feel uncomfortable or threatening if you fear someone taking advantage of the closeness of bodies, as sometimes people are wont to do, especially in a corporate club environment where people may attend who are not part of the psytrance party scene and are ignorant of their largely platonic nature. As Measham points out, dance events are usually safer for women than other club nights where alcohol related aggression is more frequent (2004). A limited amount of space also has the potential to cause harm to health as people who take psychoactive substances like MDMA are more vulnerable to overheating. In enclosed spaces the sonic dominance of the music is amplified and people on the dance-floor are a captive audience. If there are second rooms with other styles playing, i.e. a chill-out room or second dance-floor, then the sonic dominance is mitigated a little through the choice of music available to party goers. What different styles are offered in different rooms reflects area trends in local scenes because often a local label will take over a stage for the night and also because the party organisers choose styles which will attract the most party-goers.

In terms of the capacity of the sound to overwhelm the senses and beat the ego or narrative self into retreat, an enclosed space no doubt adds to the intensity of the psychedelic experience on the dance-floor. Ad Simeon suggested that the ideal listening scenario is with

decent headphones: this is the ultimate deep listening experience, which many of my participants described when discussing writing and listening to music at home using headphones. Ad Simeon suggested that party organisers' attempts to recreate this ideal listening experience through volume of sound in the club.

The politics of the indoor club dance space are conflicted. On the one hand the volume is a levelling force, affecting all bodies within the space equally. One of the things that women in psytrance scenes have expressed to me is that they feel a greater equality between people at psytrance parties than for example, a mainstream club night. Women are less likely to be harassed and they feel less pressured when it comes to maintaining their appearance because events are largely platonic rather than a dating opportunity. There is also a fairly even mix of genders at parties. On the other hand, the artists who play at parties are overwhelmingly men. There is also a physical divide between the DJ/artist and those on the dance-floor and boundaries are set through clear roles and behavioural expectations. Partygoers must not go behind the decks or touch equipment and DJs are expected to interact with the dance-floor to some degree, for example.

There is the implicit knowledge of partygoers and club staff alike that many people present have taken and have on their person illegal psychoactive substances. This causes partygoers to exercise caution in their substance use and other behaviours; they self-police, which feels restrictive, but there is also a sense of rebellion that comes from this act of disobedience and subterfuge. In trespassed indoor spaces, the dissidence is much more apparent; psychoactive substance taking is open, but there are still the social mores of psytrance culture in place.

Parties that are held in squatted warehouses or office spaces in industrial areas, for example Vauxhall in south London, have an odd juxtaposition: the illegal party, that goes on as long as people want and as long as the police do not stop it, is held in a space that is all about the work ethos, regular 9am-5pm routines, societal normativity and structures and this symbolism is pertinent considering that events like these constitute temporary autonomous zones. Indoor spaces are more often used to host psytrance events in the UK than they would be abroad in warmer climes and this must surely impact on musical style significantly. London sound is strident, fast and intense and if one is inside on a packed dance-floor, one is more likely to dance vertically rather than horizontally - to stomp. This strident sound could also be connected to the indoor party culture in the UK, as sonic dominance over dancing bodies is more readily asserted indoors. Sonic dominance also imposes the imaginary, virtual space created by the music on bodies.

The UK also has many outdoor parties in semi-urban areas on private land, forest and woodland, so this also must impact on its style of music somewhat. As mentioned, the optimum experience for psytrance events is an outdoor one: from the genesis of the culture in Goa the feeling of oceanic boundlessness and communion with nature has been central to the psytrance experience. In this sense, outdoor parties and festivals in the UK are similar in feel to those held elsewhere around the world, save that there are less of them, seeing as it is only practical to hold them in the summer months. The weather being very changeable makes these events more subject to alteration and cancellation. An example might be the forest trance party above, where torrential rain shut down the second stage of live performance, poetry and acoustic instruments, reducing the diversity of sound being heard at the event. The possibility of inclement weather makes camping in the UK a rite of passage, a sign of heartiness and an opportunity for camaraderie between festival or party-goers. There is a certain authenticity attached to this that is similar to that found with squat parties in industrial settings, where a transcendent experience may be had in an uncomfortable and/or dirty setting.

Sound systems are very important in psytrance scenes. Music is written with a high degree of audio expertise and the dimension of texture and soundscape is foregrounded, so it is paramount to have it played on a sound system that is at once powerful and able to discern and deliver the subtle nuances of texture on offer. There is less bleed between sound systems (where sound from one can be heard on the dance-floor of the other, sometimes to dissonant effect) in an indoor party setting because of the presence of dividing walls between spaces: this means that the particular haecceity of each space and sound system is expressed with clarity.

The outdoor party space affords more personal space for dancing but requires more volume from the sound system in order to assert sonic dominance over the bodies in the larger and unbounded space: it takes more power, more volume to territorialise it. This can result in bleed between stages and an almost authoritarian dominance on the campsite, when it comes to festival settings. The combined forces of all sound systems together is inescapable and therefore governs one's circadian rhythms, imposing a change in internal body space. Uncomfortable circumstances, off-kilter surroundings and psychedelic experiences are further territorialised by terms like *wonky*, *wobbly*, or *noisy* which appear in event titles, and stage and artist names on line-up posters and festival programmes. Noisily Festival is a great example of this: to my ears, it exhibited an almost authoritarian sonic dominance that was inescapable, even from the campsite.

A sense of place differs from space in that it evokes history, is attached to sites and is linked to modes of authenticity. Different venues and their locations will conjure up a mass of associations - the Volks in Brighton is known for being a 'dive' but also famed for its focus on underground music. For example, it has a sense of place due to being by the sea, the pier and the Volks electric railway, so it has that history plus the proximity to other clubs on the other side of the pier, but it is also set apart by being on the other side. The fact that it is away from the main road makes for less interaction with public or police upon leaving the club. Particular party crews may hold regular nights at specific venues like the Volks, such as Freak Bazaar, Fundamental Freqs, or the Temple Project at the Komedia in Brighton. These crews and club nights have social media accounts and so, although the Internet can seem like an unbounded, virtual, imagined or non-space, there is an element of spatial fixity to these pages as party-goers return to them to find out about events and discuss events that have taken place. The crews themselves, along with artists and partygoers, are strongly socially embedded in their local community and within their geographical creative network. Connell and Gibson (2003: 14-17) describe these networks as clusters, which arise in cities, towns and regions as a result of social embeddedness, commerce, travel and infrastructure, and which are connected with regional identity.

5.6 Conclusion

The party or festival occurs because of the interaction of musical praxis and affective alliance, in other words, people make parties happen because they want a psychedelic experience with particular music in a particular setting, in order to feel and experience in a particular way. Different audio-visual elements will overwhelm the senses when you are inside versus being outside - as mentioned before this is similar to an acid trip, where a different 'set and setting' may influence the characteristics of a trip and produce trips of varying intensity. I noted that at the licensed events there was more of a sense of going to hear a particular act play, whereas unlicensed events seemed more about the party itself and it mattered less who was playing, just that the overall style was right. In fact, many people go to these parties even though this is not their preferred kind of music, in terms of psytrance subgenre or even psytrance as an overall genre, but because of the particular experience of *communitas* they afford.

All of the sites reference the familiar through time and space via their impermanence and strong stylistic characteristics, in a process of diasporic meta-communication (Novak, 2013:

199-200). All sites also overwhelmed the senses in different ways and used the different technics available to create a similar sense of freedom. Only one of the parties had overtly spiritual overtones. The festival and the forest party invoked Britain's history of outdoor raves and the indoor squat party - and strangely, the club event - invoked the history of underground indoor raves. All sites also had quintessentially English characteristics, be that woodland and pastoral settings, an English manor house and estate, the British seaside experience, the history of London's inner city and industrial 'in-between-land' or, at the psybreaks event, the influences on British life that stem from its multiculturalism and colonial history.

Chapter 6: Plateau

Psychedelic Spheres and Circulatory Flows

6.0 Introduction

In this final chapter I bring together the aspects of the psytrance experience covered in each of the previous chapters and synthesize these to explain how I believe embodied experiences influence regional style. I begin by briefly recapping the main ideas presented in this thesis so far starting with the embodied experience of psytrance and, as I have done in the thesis as a whole, surveying the entirety of psytrance experience from within the inner psychedelic world of the dancing, trancing body. I discuss the way that these embodied, differently situated experiences are linked together, alluding to existing theories through which psytrance has been explored and compare their suitability for this task with the alternative theories I suggested earlier, like Peter Sloterdijk's spherology (2014, 2013, 2011, 2016) and Peter Webb's milieux cultures (Webb 2010).

6.1 The View from the Entranced Body

In chapter 2 I described how psytrance music works as a sonic ecology, in which listeners perceive sounds as objects with affordances. I connected the virtual space created by the music to Sloterdijk's (2011) concept of microspheres, which are virtual enclosed spaces modelled on internal psychological space. The virtual microsphere of musical psytrance space reflects the inner psychedelic experience into the real dance-floor space. I also described this in terms of a dance-floor chiasm, a crossing over of the real and virtual enabled by the enhancement of our bodies through music, dance-floor and psychoactive substances. The sonic ecology permeates a dancer's embodied experience while at the same time they project their body schema into the soundscape as a kind of avatar or virtual body. We interact with musical gestures and sounds as animate objects and even anthropomorphise them based on their character, from grotesque squelches to comforting waves which extend to embrace us.

In chapter 3 I talked about trance as an altered state of consciousness that can vary in intensity and has culturally determined characteristics. The trance is learned through repetition until it is second nature - a trance habitus. Brought about through induction processes, it overwhelms a person's usual sense of self and diminishes their experience of normal reality. In some circumstances, the trancer also feels that the self has been

transported elsewhere or temporarily replaced by a spirit or trance consciousness. I related Becker's theory (2004) that deep listening is a trance state due to traits it shares with other types of trance, such as silencing of the autobiographical self, extension of the sense of self beyond its usual bounds and experiencing a kind of possession in which the trance spirit or consciousness is the music itself.

So, in psytrance culture people build a framework for musical immersion which is culturally embedded, however it is not completely determined by culture: it can be fluid, because people can learn to listen to other musics and trance in different ways. People's sense of self can be equally fluid, in that they transgress its boundaries when trancing: they project the body schema into the virtual space of the music, augmenting the self with the affordances it offers and can allow different selves to temporarily inhabit the body. Through the movement and gesture of dancing, dancers decode musical gesture and meaning and perform the identity of whatever self they are inhabited by during the trance dance.

Musical attributes like texture and dynamics can also affect bodily comportment: a dominant, driving bassline may encourage a weightier, more impactful gait - the 'stomping' my study participants talked about, for instance. People also associate certain sounds with part of the body for example, a high pitched, clean sound with the voice and thus the head area or a low pitched, dirty sound with our abdomen and innards. Scene participants may choose to attend a forest style party where they know there will be energetic music at a pace that reflects a body exerting itself, say 150 BPM, or they may seek out a chill-out space at a festival where the pace is down tempo and peaceful, like a resting pulse rate.

Depending on factors like the space and place of the psychedelic experience, the type of psychoactive substance used or our mood at the time, a particular style may be preferred and, perhaps, prove more conducive to trance induction. In chapter 3 I recounted how my study participants used different words to describe trancing such as 'trance', 'groove' and 'flow' and that these were used interchangeably, though scholarly work has different definitions for each. I did find that some participants had a more spiritual outlook than others though and have observed this tendency on a larger scale within scenes and when comparing scenes in different locations. This accords with Charles de Ledesma's findings in his study of a British psytrance festival (2011), as I mentioned in chapter 4 when I discussed the British psytrance scene. This is just one example of how an aspect of a person's character, background or embodiment, or aspects of a people within a group, might influence the kind of musical experience they choose to have and, in turn, what styles are popular in a particular place.

People in the psytrance scene themselves emphasise the importance of the community, sometimes using the words *family* or *tribe* to describe it. Becker states that musicking and trancing are shared embodied experiences that promote bonding through sensory exploration and that we 'couple together' our nervous systems (2004). This is especially true of psytrance musicking and trancing, where psychoactive substances stimulate the nervous system and enhance sensitivity, whilst also promoting bonding through increasing empathy towards others: psytrance events create *communitas*, or spontaneous dance-floor camaraderie (St John 2008). However, *communitas* is not just a pleasant bonding experience, but also a performance. For example, seeking out and appreciating particular styles of music depends on our particular embodiment and the cultural context of our bodies so it makes a statement about one's identity. Groups of people involved in scenes also express their collective identity in this way, allying themselves with others who identify similarly and differentiating themselves from global psytrance culture.

A key part of the ritual of psytrance is the individual being subsumed into a larger whole, not just a group of people, but the overall experience. It is the same kind of self-similarity found in the music: the part is to the pattern as the pattern is to the whole. In psytrance, one may be subsumed through into the overall experience in a number of ways; by putting aside one's own autobiographical identity and taking on a party persona, through moving and gesturing with others to convey meaning or through visual aesthetic for example, clothing style, décor, lasers and lights which shine on everyone present, making them part of a tableau. Finally, people are bathed in sound: all on the dance-floor are resonated by and within the music simultaneously. Kapchan describes something similar when she writes about Moroccan Gnawa ceremonies, describing how the sound waves of the drum spread and reverberate through the dancers like flowing liquid (Kapchan 2007). These psychedelic techniques with the heat and sweat created by proximity draw people on the dance-floor into a collective BwO, a psychedelic entity (Jordan 1995: 134).

Earlier in the thesis I talked about *biological awareness* (Morelos 2009) and a similar idea, *body memory* (Kapchan 2007), a knowing that is inherent to embodiment, that bypasses the autobiographical self (Damasio 1999). It is this awareness that people tap into when they trance dance together. This is a true not just in reference to connecting with our biological awareness and that of others in the present moment, but also across time. The act of pseudo-ritualistic dancing connects us to an idealised version of ritual culture in the distant past, something that many in the Western world feel they have lost connection with through the advance of modernity and technology. It also connects people with an idealised vision of ritual culture in the future and all who will participate in it. This connectedness across time

and space is what Becker calls the supra-individual domain (2004), and what van Noorden describes with his CQS (Coalition Quality Signalling) theory (2010). CQS theory argues that before language developed in complexity, we communicated mental states, emotions and attitudes of our tribal group through music and dance. A person's choice of music and dance may therefore be not simply a preference but very meaningful, as it indicates an allegiance to a group, idea, emotion or attitude (Van Noorden 2010: 156).

In *Deep Listeners* Becker (2004: 131-55) uses Antonio Damasio's model of consciousness (Damasio 1999) to argue her theory of trance consciousness: that when we trance, the autobiographical self is temporarily replaced by a trance consciousness. Damasio holds that the awareness of the self, which is divided into the core self and the autobiographical self, is central to consciousness (see his later work *Self Comes to Mind: Constructing the Conscious Brain*, 2010, for a more developed version of his theory). If trancing allows us to extend and update our self, our identity, we are therefore changing our consciousness. Collective trancing makes this a group enterprise, so that people are updating their cultural identity and cultural consciousness in a particular way together. People have macro-consciousnesses, such as a British or European consciousness; when they trance dance they enact this consciousness and may even 'update' their Britishness or Europeaness in the same ways as they update their personal identity.

The group embodied psychedelic experiences of psytrance happen in many spaces and places. I covered some of these in chapter 5 with my descriptions of parties in urban, industrial, woodland and club settings. One could add to this the beaches of Goa and elsewhere, different locations within festivals, such as the main dance tent versus the chill-out area, arid party settings versus green, pastoral land and a variety of online spaces such as second life, radio stations, forums, social media and Soundcloud. The spaces and places impact on the reception of the music, the vibe between partygoers and the type of psychedelic experience to be had. British parties take place indoors during the colder months and even in the warmer months, covered spaces need to be provided due to changeable and wet weather. There were a few comments from my study about how the need for party-goers to feel cosy may have impacted on the culture of the British scene, with participants noting how hot drinks are often provided and that there is perhaps more activity around chill-out spaces or smoking areas than at parties taking place in hot climates. Again, this is just one aspect of a scene among many that may influence the kind of psychedelic experience people have and thereby influence the scene's style - including its musical style.

I highlighted in chapter 5 the dialogic relationship between the artistic set up of outdoor and indoor party spaces. The décor used in indoor club spaces gives the impression of being

outside under the night sky; when the same décor is used outside, it creates the feel of a sheltered space by enclosing the dance-floor or other area of the party. These are examples of Sloterdijk's spheropoiesis, the creation of macrospheres modelled on intimate biological and psychological microspheres, for example the mother's womb. In the case of psytrance, the virtual space of the music is modelled on embodied psychedelic experience (2014). While the virtual space of the music permeates the dance-floor, macrospheres are created with the placement of décor. A multiplicity of spheres at different levels of experience is now apparent. In the last chapter of *Spheres II* (2014), Sloterdijk talks about globalisation as a sphere, expanding upon this in *In the Interior World of Capital: Towards a Philosophy of Globalisation* (Elden and Mendieta 2009, Sloterdijk 2013). His concept of the globalisation of saturation as a macrosphere is important in the next sections of this chapter, where I discuss how the experiential sites of psytrance are linked together and how style develops in regions of the globe. Sloterdijk's plural-spherology is also extremely useful given the multiplicity of spheres apparent at different levels of psytrance culture. These multiple spheres form a *foam* which, as I mentioned in chapter 1, is a concept modelled after Deleuze and Guattari's rhizome (Elden and Mendieta 2009, Sloterdijk 2016).

6.2 Spheres

As discussed earlier in this thesis, spheres are created in the psytrance music - a large open space or tunnel listeners travel through. Many of the psychedelic sounds used in psytrance are spherical, such as water drops, rounded-off bass sounds or globules of sound which form, stretch and split apart like the contents of a lava lamp. The outer reach of the noise created by the sound system creates a sphere. The music and combined media allow us to project a virtual body into a virtual space - these are also spheres - we project the inner world, the biological and psychological inner sphere into a chiasmic sphere of multimedia and enhanced perception. The noises that gurgle and imply innards or replicate a heartbeat as felt in the womb are redolent of that inner physiological and psychological sphere and are being projected into the music and into our chiasmic virtual sphere. We project the womb sphere on to the party sphere so that we can widen our sphere of comfort in surrounds that are often physically uncomfortable and which may also cause us discomfort in other ways²⁰.

At parties, corners are rounded off rooms with blacking out of walls and ceilings and sale shaped pieces of fabric and even in the forest the canopy is not enough refuge - the sale fabrics, wall hangings between trees and stages are set up to produce a rounded, enclosed

²⁰ See Appendix A for an example of psytrance ephemera that references womb or vulva like shapes.

dance-floor, even though the fabric does not function as a shelter from the elements. At festivals, dance spaces and tents are often round - like bell tents for instance. Party goers dwell in the sphere created for the duration of the party. If globalisation is an attempt to create ever increasing spheres and fit all people into them, psytrance is a perfect example of that process. It widens its spheres in response to discomfort from world events and technological change, utilising the spheres of technology to replace the fallen meta-spheres of theistic religion (Couture 2009, Lemmens 2015).

The spheres of local scenes and of different technologies used to facilitate them form an actor network which consists of a multiplicity of bubbles in a foam (Sloterdijk 2016). Spheres are not inherently good or bad though, and can be exclusionary in terms of people, politics, geography and economics. An example would be the Israeli scene, in which psytrance is a mainstream popular music which unifies Israelis and has many positive effects, including allowing former IDF soldiers to find psychological healing (Schmidt 2010, St John 2010): there are also difficult political ramifications such as the reinforcement of apartheid through the exclusion of Arab Israelis and the nationalist, flag-waving fervour at parties, not to mention the consequences of the international Boycott, Divest and Sanction campaign which means that many international psytrance artists will not perform there. Another example of this would be the UK, where people from other countries do not tend to fly in for festivals in the same way and in the same volume they do for other countries' festivals because of the prohibitive cost, short duration of festivals and unreliable, often wet, weather - a situation that may only become worse with the coming isolationism of the UK's departure from the EU.

Local scenes are spheres in a foam and each locale produces its own according to what it needs and the materials that occur naturally in local surrounds. The basic building blocks and materials for psytrance world-building come from the global scene and are used as a starting point each time. It is like Ad Simeon's *Something Groovy* décor, the stretchy sail shaped pieces of fabric and poles that are easily taken on a plane and constructed again in any location, are brought into countries for different parties. The same set of shapes and colours may be used in several different settings across the globe but they become part of the local surrounds and take on the characteristics of the geographic spot they are set up in.

6.3 Global, Local and Milieu

Places differs from spaces in that they evoke history, are attached to sites and are linked to modes of authenticity (Hayden 2014). Different venues and their locations will conjure up a mass of associations. Party crews, along with artists and partygoers are strongly socially embedded in their local community and within their geographical creative network. Connell

and Gibson (2004) describe these networks as clusters, which arise in cities, towns and regions as a result of social embeddedness, commerce, travel infrastructure etc., and are connected with regional identity. Towns, cities and regions may be more or less connected - internally, with other places over geographic space and to the global marketplace via digital communication networks. This also has an effect on identity and style as well as competition in both commercial and creative sense, with other towns and cities and regions. Good examples in terms of the UK scene might be competition between scenes in Bristol or Brighton with London.

In his 1995 monograph *Globalization*, Malcolm Waters describes an idealised global culture which allows for a “continuous flow of ideas, information, commitment, values and tastes mediated through mobile individuals, symbolic tokens and electronic simulations” and states that globalisation is defined as the processes undertaken to achieve this idealised cultural state (Berger and Carroll 2003: 83, citing Waters 1995: 126). Waters’ definition is an excellent fit for psytrance culture, which has a strong nomadic contingent and ‘exile’ sensibility (see St John 2012c: for more on this topic) and whose sites of experience, both virtual and physical comprise electronic simulations of hyperreal or other-worldly environments. The territory of globalized cultures and entities is geographically widespread, reaching across borders. Critics of globalization have raised concerns about this; Will Straw for example, states that global culture reproduces local cultures within it in more uniform ways (Straw 1991: 378). Anxieties over globalized popular culture focus on this homogenising effect, predicting that it will eventually subsume local cultures and styles (Berger and Carroll 2003: xviii).

Economic globalisation (adaption of a global product to local culture and integrating the local culture into the market) can also be applied to aspects of psytrance, for example commercial psy trance music sales, international festivals and the business practices of labels. Notions of cultural globalisation include the non-commercial, DIY, underground psytrance culture but the global/local paradigm can exclude key aspects of local style formation, such as national identities or embodied, person-centred perspectives (Biddle and Knights 2007: 2).

A range of concepts that take in the dynamics of that process is needed. We could add transnational, which includes national identity when describing cultures that transcend borders. Another synergistic concept is *milieu*, which begins with a person’s experience and fans out from there to encompass both the network of ideas, interactions, spaces, places etc. that constitute their experience of local music culture, and also the wider network of societal power structures and systems that intersect with this. Dürschmidt, for example, argues that people experience globalisation as a physical and symbolic extension of their

milieu (Dürschmidt, 2013). Milieu also liberates the concept of local from the global/local binary by describing the many intersecting networks across geographical space, so that global and local become points on a spectrum of varying spatial areas where interaction and experience take place (ibid 2007: 2).

The global/local paradigm has also been discussed as a generator of cultural variety, in the way that it causes difference to proliferate through hybridity. Straw for instance, in the same work in which he critiques the homogenising effect of globalisation also speaks about translocal interactions give rise to variations in style: "The development of alternative culture may be said to follow a logic in which a particular pluralism of music languages repeats itself from one community to another. Each local space has evolved to varying degrees the range of musical vernaculars emergent within others" (Straw 1991). Marwan Kraidy, in his review of the discourse around hybridity in cultural globalization concludes that hybridity should be theorized as a condition that can neither be understood within a binary, nor be fixed so that it constitutes a third category. Instead he argues that the concept of hybridity describes the "dual forces of globalization and localization, cohesion and dispersal, disjuncture and mixture, that capture transnational and transcultural dialectics" (Kraidy 2002: 329). These dialectical forces continuously flow and circulate, updating with each interaction in the same manner as people continuously change and update their identity through bodily experience and interaction with others and the world. So in the same way as a person is involved in an ongoing process of questioning and redefining what it means, for example, to be British, British national identity is also repeatedly being queried and reassembled through this dynamic process.

So, musical praxis and affective alliances create cultural spaces out of wider culture. Local sounds occur unintentionally as working together in the same local area necessarily creates similarity (Grossberg 1997: 35-46). This can also work in reverse: musicians often distance themselves from local scenes though because of the way they are mythologised, marketed and commodified by big record labels, mined for authenticity and cultural capital. They want to maintain their independence and individuality from this (Webb 2010: 115). There is a commerce versus creativity conflict, something which is especially evident in psytrance: the producers I spoke to made a point of disconnecting their work from local extra-musical influence, claiming it as independent, entirely personal or an escape from or antidote to wider culture.

As I explained in chapter 1, milieu is a concept used by cultural theorists and in sociology, where it is associated with the concept of 'social environment' which Barnett and Casper (2001: 465) define as encompassing "the immediate physical surroundings, social

relationships, and cultural milieus within which defined groups of people function and interact.” In phenomenology milieu is a stable group of actions, routine and meaning which is familiar to an individual and gives them a feeling of situatedness (Dürschmidt 2013, citing Webb 2010: 31). This definition arose partly in response to the concepts of subcultures, scenes and neo-tribes, which he felt were too prescriptive and did not have enough evidence to support them. Webb’s definition aims to capture the “dynamic, fluid and changing nature of music making and musical associations” (Webb 2010: 30-31).

6.5 Cultures of Circulation

David Novak uses audio feedback as a metaphor to explain how circulatory processes form an ever-changing network of cultural information and practices that resist being fixed to a definite geographical place, but whose loops of circulation connect different places. Here I provide some examples of circulation at work in psytrance.

Commercially successful producers are often signed to labels that curate groups of artists from disparate places, who in turn contribute to the particular sound of their label - though sometimes the artists are not even in the same sub-genre or style. Labels also sell tunes and albums online and they get a varied, international audience. How much interest there is in their artists, how much revenue is received from the sale of their music and other types of feedback the label receives may affect what artists and styles they choose to curate.

Commercially successful producers get booked to play at parties internationally where people experience the vibe of their music, which was created in one particular cultural context, in their own location and cultural context. Interviewee Robin said about the decline in the commercial UK psytrance scene in the last decade:

...it all changed for many years and fees dropped dramatically..., unless they’re Dickster, Tristan or some of the more long-standing well-known names ...they weren’t barely making over a grand a gig. With so many artists out there and so many festivals with their pre-decided agenda of what style, or what artists they already want, that doesn’t really make it as easy for booking managers to get the others gigs.

People from all geographical locations can also talk about the music online and purchase it. If they are a DJ they may put the artist's music in their set, re-contextualising it again within the makeup of their own particular vibe. Sometimes artists wishing to break into commercial success may even tailor their style to fit the style of what is commercially successful in a region in order to get bookings there, reinforcing the prevalence of that style in a region even more. Other artists will resist tailoring their style in this way and this means they may not get booked in their own country but have great interest in another geographical location, creating

a transnational flow of cultural exchange. Interviewee Chris described the way in which DJing different styles influenced the range of people on the dancefloor:

Like with Drez's stuff, I could clear dance-floors, virtually clear them. You'd only have the real crusties with dreads down to their arses. You know, the real psychedelic warriors...I would love to play for them, I would be more than happy for all the kind of pill heads, the weekender pill heads would find it a bit too much and go off. Fine. But the real psychedelic warriors, the people doing psychedelic drugs particularly would really respond to that kind of music and that's the sort of thing I was trying to make as well with my music.

The influence labels have on style is evident in interviewee Lainey's comment about her collaborative project:

...the making the bass and the percussion - and actually getting that up to standard as well, I find it the hardest. I find it's also the thing that actually labels are really looking for the most as well, also like one of the most important things...

Connell and Gibson, in their book *Sound Tracks*, discuss how people migrate to different areas identified with sounds in a spatial trajectory of belonging - they call them *diaspora pilgrims* (2003). Examples of areas identified with sounds could be Seattle and its rainy weather where grunge music arose with its gloomy, moody sound - listen for example to the words of record producer Jack Endino in the film *Hype!* (Pray 1997), a documentary on the Seattle rock scene: "When the weather's crappy you don't feel like going outside, you go into a basement and make a lot of noise to take out your frustration." Another example might be Detroit, with its industrial history refracted through the lens of Afro-futuristic techno (Albiez 2005). Processes that create styles are complex though, as well as being transient and fluid. Local scenes come from multidirectional flows and influences so it is by no means easy to determine what characterises local style and how it comes about.

Isolation and remoteness can symbolise a 'pre-capitalist craftsmanship' production values in people's minds: being cut off from global influences allows a distinct sound to be nurtured (Connell and Gibson 2003: 105-06). The sense of space or place can be constructed through music - and the ways it is marketed and heard - through nostalgia for a place and time. The scene or sound comes from a critical mass of musicians or fans plus physical spaces and infrastructures, that allow for new music to emerge, concentrating and solidifying cultural meaning in that area. Particular studios, labels and locations create heritage and help fix an identity to a geographical locale and its music. Similar geographical and cultural contexts can cause parallel trends to occur in scenes in different locations. Community and transnational linkage are real but can also be symbolic: there are imagined communities or imaginary communities which have been created and maintained through the connectivity of

the Internet. Though the local scenes require physical space and infrastructure to keep going the sense of community and desire to maintain culture are amplified by trans-cultural feelings of community. But this also disconnects the scene from a single place as well (ibid 2003: 101-107).

Schizophonia, the splitting off and recreation or re-contextualisation of sounds (Schafer 1994), and schismogenesis, the differentiation of norms as a result of cumulative interaction between individuals (Bateson 1958: 175-77), are key processes in the evolution and transmission of style. In psytrance for example, when local DIY producers and DJs work with each-other and play locally, they transmit semantic communication and receive it through listening to the music of other artists and collaborating with other artists. Kapchan discusses the concepts of schizophonia when talking about the proliferation of Gnawa trance commercially in the West (2007: 149). She describes it as where sounds are removed from one context or culture of provenance and transported to another, giving rise to schismogenesis, which is where new trajectories and iterations are formed within “imaginal realms of dialogue and contestation” (ibid 2007: 149). Schizophonia and schismogenesis are described as interdependent forces, which identify difference between cultures and contexts, providing that which the other culture or context is lacking and filling the gap. This allows for the creation of a multiplicity of forms, styles and meanings (ibid 2007: 149).

Another consideration is that different countries or geographic regions have varying ratios of DIY, non-commercial producers and DJs and commercially successful producers and DJs, representing an underground, grassroots scene and a parallel mainstream, commercial scene. Similarly, there are parties which are either illegally held on trespassed land or buildings, those which circumvent the law by using private land and using an invite only system of entry and those which are held in licensed clubs or are licensed festivals, so again there is a distinction to be made (if not a clearly delineated one) between a kind of mainstream, visible scene and an underground scene - this is demonstrated in the ethnographic pieces in chapter 5. The proportion of underground to mainstream will be an important factor in the creation of a local vibe, specific to a geographic location and this could be influenced by many factors, for example the laws of the region governing psychoactive substance use or how people may gather in a public or private space.

There are also regional zones of intensity, like London for example, where styles seem to become more firmly entrenched because of a reception-feedback ‘loop’. The party promoter’s role in the industry is important; a style can become even more entrenched in a particular area once they know it is guaranteed to draw a crowd to the dance floor and sell

tickets. For example, if an audience hears a particular style like the fast, driving London sound and this draws them in crowds to parties, organisers are likely to book the artists with that sound for their party again in future. People choose the kind of embodied experience they want to have based on who they are and their outlook and 'vote with their feet' in attending parties that they feel will help to induce that experience. As organisers know that the style draws crowds and brings in revenue, more parties in the region may start to play this style to the exclusion of all others. The style is further popularised amongst audiences/listeners and they come to expect it at parties.

If these intensity zones are major cities, the popularity of the prevailing style there may come to be representative in people's minds as the definitive style of the greater region. Particular styles become popular in particular geographic locations which can be proximal to regions of a country, the country as a whole, or transcend the national to become a trend for a wider geographic area. If a particular style becomes the prevailing trend in another geographical location/country, then it may become seen as representative of an even wider region - for example the dark trance style of Eastern Europe and Russia and the forest style favoured in Scandinavia.

The way in which I visualize the process of circulation and feedback in psytrance is through a metaphor of global versus local climate and weather systems. Global climate is composed of the totality of local weather, atmospheric conditions, the Sun etc. and local climate is a product of global climate and weather plus local weather, which is influenced by factors like the landscape - a fixed local influence. I have also found it useful to think about stylistic factors in local psytrance scenes as like local accents or dialects, where different accents and dialects share the language but express it in idiosyncratic ways that are influenced by climate, mouth shape, body shape and locality - for example, more remote and isolated areas, accents and dialects experience feedback, where idiosyncrasies end up becoming more entrenched because of less communication with other communities. The more isolated communities, the greater diversity of accents and dialects.

6.6 Conclusion

I find the concepts 'cultures of circulation' and *milieux* the most appropriate concepts for describing psytrance culture. Scholars like St John have used the concepts of scenes and tribes and the local and global to discuss specific aspects of psytrance culture (2010b), but circulation and *milieux* I think provide the best means to take an overview of psytrance and how different styles form. In Novak's concept of circulation, he uses the feedback technique of Japanese musicians both literally, describing a circulatory process of sound processing,

and metaphorically, scaling it up to describe a network of intersecting, multidirectional cultural flows that are always in flux and not anchored to a geographical location. Circulation is not just about movement and exchange but incorporates performance practice and process. Novak describes it as a nexus of cultural production, which he sees as a product of globalisation (2013).

Novak's concept translates well for psytrance on both literal and metaphorical levels. Like noise music, psytrance is in part constructed through looping, passing sound signals through filters and other iterative processes. Novak also states that noise blurs the divide between underground and high culture, public and private musical participation, and technological networks and non-Internet-based social networks, among other distinctions. Similarly, the concept of circulation unites the underground, DIY rhizome and the commercial strata of psytrance as well as distribution and practice and all the different places, spaces and locations of experience, including physical and virtual, which are described in this thesis. Circulation in this way both incorporates globalisation and moves beyond it, i.e. includes the commercial strata of psytrance which is subject to economic globalisation whilst providing a more malleable theoretical framework to describe other aspects of commercial psytrance and also the cultural flows of underground or DIY site trance culture. It is also useful to describe how musical style circulates, concentrates and becomes entrenched locally, as I have tried to do in this chapter.

I have described psytrance as a pop-up culture that recreates its vibe "anywhere and any when" in a transient and mercurial manner. Milieu is a more useful term than scene or tribe because it also does not seek to definitively attach cultures to particular locations. It is also a concept that describes networks from the perspective of actors. In focusing on the in-between, actors in relation to each other, it is therefore conducive to my embodied phenomenological approach to psytrance. A concept like 'milieu' can seem a bit vague and universally applicable, something it has in common with Deleuze and Guattari's BwO and rhizome, which remain popular concepts in many fields beyond EDMC studies. However, psytrance, and psychedelic music in general, is in my opinion about in-between-ness and things in relation to each other, so these terms are wholly appropriate. Psychedelicness generally, I feel, comes about as a result of looking at things in relation to each other and coming to some sort of moment of revelation about difference and interconnectedness.

Overall it seems to me that in the psytrance experience we are also tripping on the dialectical relationship between novelty and difference versus repetition and process. Psychedelicness, a word I have used throughout this thesis to describe qualities in music which are psychedelic, is a concept is based in acoustemology (itself based in relational

ontology): because it is about treating sound as a way of knowing. The feeling of psychedelicism in my opinion results from a revelation or epiphany about the collectivity of being. This happens through conceptualising ourselves as sound bodies within the network and focusing on the networking forces in between sound bodies and other actors. The networking forces or lines between sounding bodies and actors are the transmission routes of listening and understanding from which we receive sound knowledge. Through highlighting difference we experience the unity and interconnectedness of the network.

As has been shown, music can represent the cohesion of a group of people. The psychedelic nature of psytrance lies in an epiphany of the interconnectedness of things living and non-living. Global psytrance culture reflects this whole concept whereas local psytrance culture and style can be seen as a corner of the whole network which gives a particular perspective of it. This is self-similarity: the idea that the part is to the pattern as the pattern is to the whole.

Psytrance is processed music involving self-similar patterns which are reminiscent of the visual disturbances people experience when they take LSD or other hallucinogens, where one is 'tripping on the architecture of one's own brain' - the same architecture found in elsewhere in the natural world. The music is very repetitive, but at the same time never comes back to the same point. It is a thing moving with moving internal parts and a changing surface. Ad Simeon's story about the woman in white dancing, whilst bubble shapes were projected on her body and clothing, exemplifies this well. He says that she was moving, but also her 'surface' was moving and so she became part of the décor. It is engagement in this kind of repetitive but exploratory process which allows people, societies and cultures to learn and evolve, whether that process be an embodied activity like trancing or macro-scale flows of musical schismogenesis which allow regional styles to develop.

A visual representation of this might be sculptures of John Edmark. His kinetic sculptures, which use the Fibonacci series found in nature, the so-called 'golden angle'. In plants, for example, it minimises energy consumption during growth and maximises access to light and other nutrients by ensuring each leaf is distributed along the stem without blocking another. The Fibonacci sequence forms spirals in nature, something which is a common symbol in psytrance communities. The music reflects this in the way that it is very repetitive but rather than coming back to an exact repetition each time it shifts slightly with each iteration: figuratively speaking, it forms a spiral instead of a circle. In Edmark's works, forms are created with repeating shapes which are able to move around a central structure. By a flick of the wrist, a gust of wind or other impulse, all the pieces shift very slightly and reposition themselves in relation to each other, forming a different shape. Another example might be

Steve Reich's phasing technique, where for example, two instruments play a rhythm and gradually one changes pace, producing a succession of complex rhythmic patterns. If psychedelically inspired music reflects this principle, it engages people in deep listening that is like an LSD trip: a trip whose hallucinatory patterns emerge through recognising the repetitive processes of life, as well as the knowledge that everything is in flux and one can never return to exactly the same point. These kind of philosophical reflections lead to feelings of significance and enlightenment, which are commonly experienced by people who use psychoactive substances. Music that causes people to reflect in the same way as psychoactive substance use does can only enhance psychedelic experiences.

7. Conclusion: Come-down

My primary research question was how local psytrance styles emerge from local geographical and cultural contexts. (Readers can turn to Appendix A1 for a diagram showing how the research questions and sub-questions arose and what methodologies were used to investigate them.) I investigated this using a mixed methods approach and used the resulting data to argue that the factors that have the most impact on local musical style are embodied experience, identity, space and place.

The first sub-questions I asked were whether certain stylistic traits in psytrance music could be tied to geographical locations and what musical characteristics differentiate regional styles of psytrance. I investigated these questions primarily through musical analysis, the questionnaire, and my initial interviews. Data from my interviews and questionnaire showed a mixed response to these questions – for example, some participants were reluctant to agree there is a UK sound but knew which artists exemplified that sound and others agreed there was a UK sound, but found it difficult to identify specific characteristics that differentiate it from other styles. In my question about recognisable styles, the UK sound was hardly mentioned, however the favourite artists of British and Non-British survey respondents, were overwhelmingly British. As mentioned in my introduction, sub-genre boundaries are contested - as are the boundaries of psytrance itself, leading to some people using the more inclusive term 'PDM'. The data from my interviews and questionnaire seems to reflect this contestation.

My research into the UK scene identified some seemingly conflicting stylistic traits: a trickster-ish humour and grotesque, debased psychedelic sensibilities alongside a 'grown-up' approach to audio techniques such as sound synthesis. I also argued for an introspective psychedelicalness, which replicates the kind of liquid noises such as those which come from the inner workings of the body. My conclusion regarding these sub questions is therefore that yes, stylistic traits can be linked to particular geographic regions, and that yes, there are certain identifiable traits to regional styles of psytrance: as evidenced by my study of the UK sound and scene. However, often the traits cross over with traits of styles from other regions, or the traits differ very subtly and are difficult to identify as being from a particular region.

I then asked how regional styles of psytrance develop and investigated this through musical analysis, my questionnaire, interviews and my participant observation. My early interviews and questionnaire revealed a wide range of practical factors implicated in style formation, ranging from the personal identity of the composer or producer influencing their composition

style, to proximity with other artists, to use of particular psychoactive substances, audience identity, space and place, the wider culture surrounding the enclave of a regional psytrance scene and many commercial aspects, such as the way that labels, booking agencies, promoters, and party crews operate within the scene. All these factors are bound together and mediated by the embodied experience of music and the psytrance party: they are all in the service of producing the right environment for having a peak psychedelic experience on the dancefloor.

As explained in my methodology chapter, I decided to reframe my research from embodied phenomenological perspective and ask what role the body and the embodied experience of psytrance play in the development of musical style and how stylistic traits in the music are reflected in all the different sensory domains at play in the psytrance party. I asked whether certain styles encourage different qualities of trance and if these different qualitative experiences be markers of difference between regional styles.

I drew out themes and words like 'trance', 'groove' and 'flow' from my interview and questionnaire data and asked what they mean in the context of music and dancing and what they tell us about the embodied psychedelic experience at psytrance parties. My data suggested that in the case of the UK, the faster and more driving styles tended to encourage strident repetitive movements, which could be considered conducive to strong trance states and that lower tempo music had more space for bodies to move horizontally and for the hips and shoulders to become involved in movement, leading to a more relaxed kind of trance state, perhaps better exemplified by the words 'groove' and 'flow'. I also found that the kind of movement afforded by particular styles had an effect on audience behaviour: certain styles 'call' certain people to the dancefloor, not only because they prefer the sound, but because they prefer to move in a particular way.

I found that some of my British respondents seemed more comfortable with using the words groove and flow in relation to their composition and dancefloor experiences: the word 'trance' was more strongly associated with spirituality, 'groove' with the body and 'flow' or 'the zone' being more of a psychological state. This led me to agree with Charles de Ledesma that UK Psytrance parties are less spiritual affair than parties in other regions of the world.

Looking at different sensory domains involved in the dancefloor experience and how the context of place and space effect style helped to address the question of how elements of the surrounding culture in which a scene is embedded influence the sound of that region. Certain visual aesthetics were mirrored in the music: a particularly good example was how

the treatment of different rooms in a squat or attempts at Festival with decor, were attuned to difference sub-genres, moods and tempi. This allowed other influencing factors to become involved in style formation, for example the extra-musical influence of the smoking ban legislation in the UK, which changed the role of the chill-out space to the second room and influenced the style of music which would be played there. This is important as the styles which audiences are exposed to can become part of a prevailing trend within a region, through for example, schismogenesis caused by having two different genres in proximity to one another.

I used Novak's concept of circulatory feedback to explain how stylistic traits can transcend geography and be communicated across space time, making their way between different regional psytrance enclaves. Webb's concept of networked milieu, which captures the dynamism and fluidity of musical change, also disconnects music scenes from geographic space, linking them through the meta-communication of minds and bodies in the virtuality of thought and of the digitally networked world. These concepts are both body and experience-centred paradigms, but provide examples of how embodied experience can be lifted beyond the physical and geographical, connecting individual embodied experiences together. In investigating the role of place and space on style formation I considered the womb-like and circular aspects of the parties I attended for participant observation. My interviews data contained statements which supported these ideas, such as a deliberate rounding off of square spaces in the décor design. Sloterdijk's 'spherology' was recommended to me as it contains similar themes and expands on these to produce an alternate history of modern civilisation, but also follows a rhizomatic model - his 'plural spherology' allowing for multiple interpretations and open ended enough to include other plural and multiple paradigms like circulatory feedback and networked milieux.

To sum up my response to the primary research question, I believe the emergence of psytrance styles begins with culturally situated psychedelic experiences which vary according to individual identity, place, space, psychoactive substance use and myriad other possible factors and which are mediated by wider considerations like national identity, law and socio-economic forces. Meaning and style are communicated through musical affect and gesture to listeners and dancers and transmitted from person to person through musical collaboration, bodily comportment, language and clothing aesthetic. Meaning and style are communicated over distance through people travelling to different parties and festivals, online forums, radio stations and music stores and continually updated through music composition - particularly schismogenesis and the co-option of stylistic elements from other genres of music - dance-floor experiences and identity performance. Local culture is in a

dialogic relationship with global culture where global identity and style is updated and reaffirmed and local identity and style updates in response.

This explanation is not absolute and fixed though; the reality is much more fluid and complex and stylistic differences between scenes in particular locales can be very subtle. In addition, this is an overview from my perspective as a researcher; any explanation that begins with embodied experience will necessarily be subjective and some of my study participants disagreed with me on major points such as whether there was, for example, a British psytrance style - some were even of the view that global psytrance culture is ubiquitous no matter where in the world it manifests. The limitations of my study in terms of the resources available to me means that it is not within the scope of this thesis to be more systematic and precise in theorizing style formation in psytrance.

The theoretical concepts described above chime with my outlook on my own research, which was reflexive and circulatory and though having started out in a more analytical vein, branched out into a variety of different methodologies, concentrating on embodied phenomenological experience. The reflexive process described drew another research question, asking what research paradigm and methodological approach best serves researchers of psytrance. Undertaking this research led me to the conclusion that a multi-pronged methodological approach along with multiple and yet non-competing theories to describe the different aspects of psytrance, was the ideal. This last research question formed the basis of chapter 6, where I try to take an overview of the different phenomenological threads of enquiry in the thesis while also arguing for approaches which are multiple, and also resist the urge to draw 'grand universal theory' style conclusions.

Within this secondary research question was a sub-question about whether tribal and ritual paradigms are appropriate in the study of psytrance. My response is that tribal anthropological paradigms work on certain levels: if one places trance as central to psytrance then one is bound to tribal paradigms necessarily. However, taking a broader view of ASCs that includes spiritual and non-spiritual experiences means looking beyond tribal paradigms. You cannot discuss scenes that are not wedded to spiritual or ritual ideas in a ritual tribal sense if this is not how they see themselves. Good anthropology tries to put foremost the experience and point of view of the subject. To do this one needs to have an inclusive research paradigm. The most central things in psytrance are embodied experience and expression of identity. Science based and psychological approaches to ASCs match with science and psychological based approaches to group behaviour and the development

of culture. Combining anthropological, scientific and musicological approaches allows for the inclusion of a wide selection of views from a range of people within a variety of scenes.

Also, scenes and tribes, local and global are very fixed ideas and do not map to the reality of human culture which, like human beings themselves, is constantly updating, travelling, evolving and flowing. Concepts like spherology and milieu offer a non-spiritual way to explore psytrance without being wedded to a particular paradigm. These concepts also facilitate research which stays person-centred, whether the focus of a study is at the micro level of individual embodied experience or at a macro-level of group, national or global experience.

The main insight I offer here is that psytrance style, in addition to being spread through means which are easily recognisable like language, performance and collaborations between artists, can be communicated in more subtle ways between listeners on the dancefloor, like affect, gesture and bodily comportment.

A key contribution to new knowledge is a solid example of a change in musical style in the UK over the last decade, with plenty of suggestions as to why that may be: changes to drug legislation which occurred beforehand, restrictive licensing laws and crackdowns by local authorities on festivals, the aging crowd in the UK - which seems to have more connection to past iterations of psyculture and more mature production skills, VST plug-ins and torrent downloading, saturation of the creative market, the loss of artist representation by labels and agents, changes in types of party venue, party organisers 'gatekeeping' of styles, parties moving from rural regions to the city. All these are fairly practical issues, but they all directly influence the embodied psychedelic experience of the dancefloor: what matters most from my perspective is whether the crowd like what is played at a party, whether it invites them to dance and whether it works in synchrony with the other sensory elements to take them away from their daily life by providing a warped experience of time, place, mind-set, identity and body.

Other contributions to knowledge I make include: the new data I have gathered on the UK scene through my mixed methodological approach and my analysis of this; the phenomenological analysis of psytrance found throughout but especially in chapters 2 and 3; my use of spheropoiesis theory to connect the inner psychological experience of psytrance, revealed through embodied analysis, to group experiences, spaces and places, and how I combine the notions of cultures of circulation and feedback (Novak), milieux cultures (Dürschmidt, Webb) and spheropoiesis, to conceptualise how cultural information flows through networks of scenes in different geographic locales.

8. Afterglow

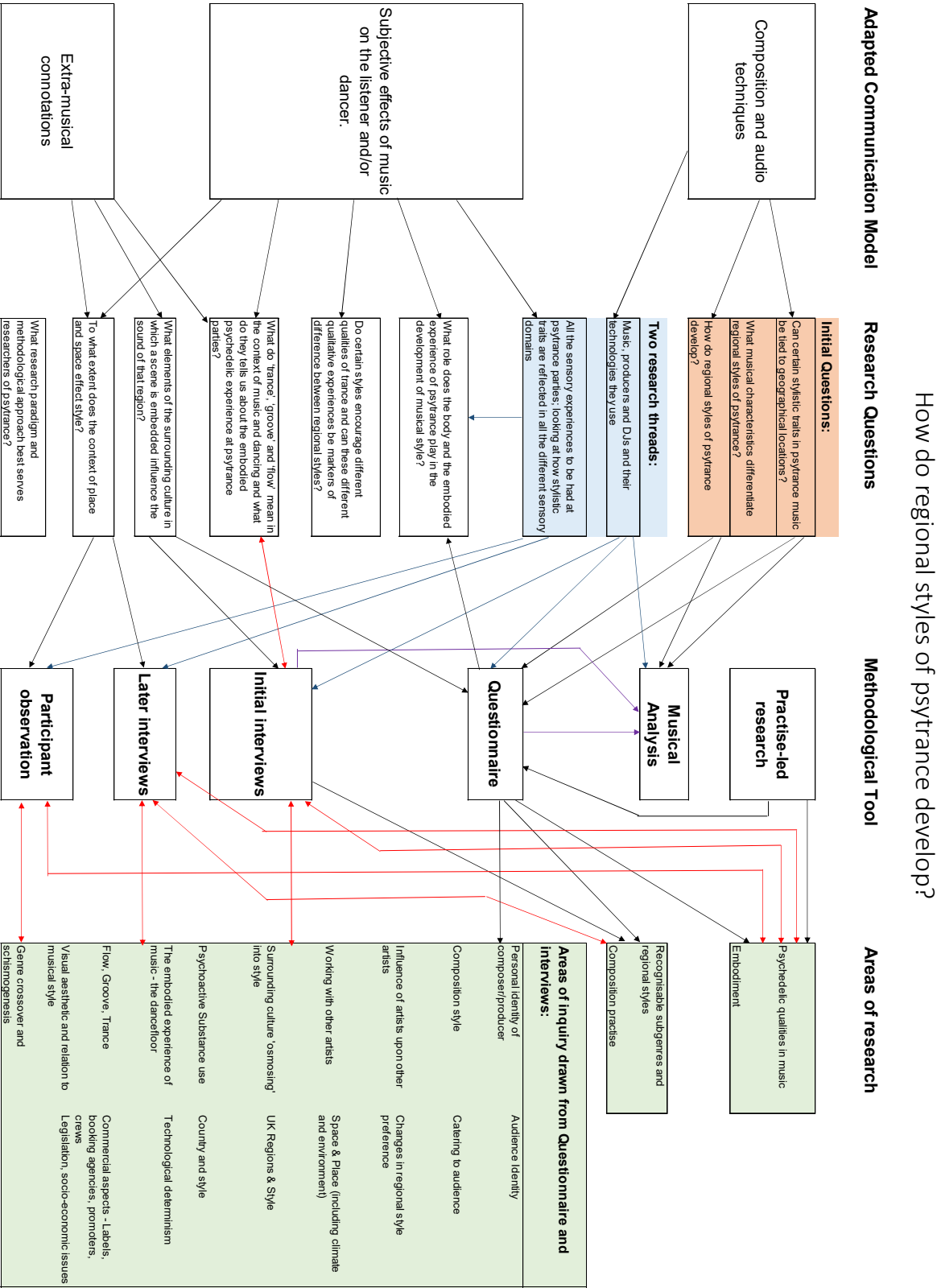
Future research directions

What I would suggest for future research is taking one stylistic trait and exploring all its related characteristics across different planes of meaning, using both the mixed methods approach I have taken and also delving into analogues in the music more systematically. For example, one could take a musical trait like short, staccato, accented sounds and systematically analyse it using algorithmic software to identify it in a large number of tracks, looking at prevalence in particular styles and in music produced by a particular country. Then one would turn to isometrically equivalent stylistic traits in other areas such as the visual domain. So, perhaps one would consider the triangular, pointed fabric used in décor at parties, the prevalence of pointy aesthetics in clothing, such as pixie hoods and elfin, pointed leggings etc. and look at the history and meaning of these and how that links to the musical pointiness identified in music from different locales. One might for example look at elfin lore in British history and literature, speak to designers who make psytrance clothing to find out how styles have developed.

Another research direction I would like to see explored in future is the link between musical style, language and climate. Research from the field of sociolinguistics has found a correlation between speech sonority and climate: essentially, the warmer the climate, the more sonorous the language. Language speakers in cold climates are likely to speak with a less open mouth, resulting in less sonority and volume (Peterson and Broad 2009, Everett et al. 2015). Other research has made a link between sonority and sexual permissiveness in cultures (Ember and Ember 2007). One has to be careful when drawing a comparison between music and language - scholars have written about the pitfalls of this, not least the problem that different cultures interpret sounds differently and attach different associations to them. However, if the musical genre one uses as a case study foregrounds timbre and texture rather than melody and lyrics - like psytrance does - and if one then limits the scope of enquiry to phonemes, mouth and body structure and climate - language as sound and pre-linguistic gesture - this could work as an interesting way to draw out how geographic location influences musical style.

APPENDIX A

1. Research Design Diagram



2. Analysis of a Sample of Psytrance Tracks

UK - Musical Expression

Artist		Track name		Album title		Record Label	
Sonic Species		Just Another Funk		N/A		Digital On	
Length of piece & sections		05:51		07:28		07:11	
Order of themes		Order of themes		Order of themes		Order of themes	
1. Intro (0:00-0:15)		1. Intro (0:00-0:15)		1. Intro (0:00-0:15)		1. Intro (0:00-0:15)	
2. Verse (0:15-0:45)		2. Verse (0:15-0:45)		2. Verse (0:15-0:45)		2. Verse (0:15-0:45)	
3. Chorus (0:45-1:15)		3. Chorus (0:45-1:15)		3. Chorus (0:45-1:15)		3. Chorus (0:45-1:15)	
4. Bridge (1:15-1:45)		4. Bridge (1:15-1:45)		4. Bridge (1:15-1:45)		4. Bridge (1:15-1:45)	
5. Outro (1:45-2:00)		5. Outro (1:45-2:00)		5. Outro (1:45-2:00)		5. Outro (1:45-2:00)	
6. Post-chorus (2:00-2:15)		6. Post-chorus (2:00-2:15)		6. Post-chorus (2:00-2:15)		6. Post-chorus (2:00-2:15)	
7. Interlude (2:15-2:30)		7. Interlude (2:15-2:30)		7. Interlude (2:15-2:30)		7. Interlude (2:15-2:30)	
8. Final chorus (2:30-3:00)		8. Final chorus (2:30-3:00)		8. Final chorus (2:30-3:00)		8. Final chorus (2:30-3:00)	
9. End (3:00-3:15)		9. End (3:00-3:15)		9. End (3:00-3:15)		9. End (3:00-3:15)	
10. Post-outro (3:15-3:30)		10. Post-outro (3:15-3:30)		10. Post-outro (3:15-3:30)		10. Post-outro (3:15-3:30)	
11. Final chorus (3:30-4:00)		11. Final chorus (3:30-4:00)		11. Final chorus (3:30-4:00)		11. Final chorus (3:30-4:00)	
12. End (4:00-4:15)		12. End (4:00-4:15)		12. End (4:00-4:15)		12. End (4:00-4:15)	
13. Post-outro (4:15-4:30)		13. Post-outro (4:15-4:30)		13. Post-outro (4:15-4:30)		13. Post-outro (4:15-4:30)	
14. Final chorus (4:30-5:00)		14. Final chorus (4:30-5:00)		14. Final chorus (4:30-5:00)		14. Final chorus (4:30-5:00)	
15. End (5:00-5:15)		15. End (5:00-5:15)		15. End (5:00-5:15)		15. End (5:00-5:15)	
16. Post-outro (5:15-5:30)		16. Post-outro (5:15-5:30)		16. Post-outro (5:15-5:30)		16. Post-outro (5:15-5:30)	
17. Final chorus (5:30-6:00)		17. Final chorus (5:30-6:00)		17. Final chorus (5:30-6:00)		17. Final chorus (5:30-6:00)	
18. End (6:00-6:15)		18. End (6:00-6:15)		18. End (6:00-6:15)		18. End (6:00-6:15)	
19. Post-outro (6:15-6:30)		19. Post-outro (6:15-6:30)		19. Post-outro (6:15-6:30)		19. Post-outro (6:15-6:30)	
20. Final chorus (6:30-7:00)		20. Final chorus (6:30-7:00)		20. Final chorus (6:30-7:00)		20. Final chorus (6:30-7:00)	
21. End (7:00-7:15)		21. End (7:00-7:15)		21. End (7:00-7:15)		21. End (7:00-7:15)	
22. Post-outro (7:15-7:30)		22. Post-outro (7:15-7:30)		22. Post-outro (7:15-7:30)		22. Post-outro (7:15-7:30)	
23. Final chorus (7:30-8:00)		23. Final chorus (7:30-8:00)		23. Final chorus (7:30-8:00)		23. Final chorus (7:30-8:00)	
24. End (8:00-8:15)		24. End (8:00-8:15)		24. End (8:00-8:15)		24. End (8:00-8:15)	
25. Post-outro (8:15-8:30)		25. Post-outro (8:15-8:30)		25. Post-outro (8:15-8:30)		25. Post-outro (8:15-8:30)	
26. Final chorus (8:30-9:00)		26. Final chorus (8:30-9:00)		26. Final chorus (8:30-9:00)		26. Final chorus (8:30-9:00)	
27. End (9:00-9:15)		27. End (9:00-9:15)		27. End (9:00-9:15)		27. End (9:00-9:15)	
28. Post-outro (9:15-9:30)		28. Post-outro (9:15-9:30)		28. Post-outro (9:15-9:30)		28. Post-outro (9:15-9:30)	
29. Final chorus (9:30-10:00)		29. Final chorus (9:30-10:00)		29. Final chorus (9:30-10:00)		29. Final chorus (9:30-10:00)	
30. End (10:00-10:15)		30. End (10:00-10:15)		30. End (10:00-10:15)		30. End (10:00-10:15)	
31. Post-outro (10:15-10:30)		31. Post-outro (10:15-10:30)		31. Post-outro (10:15-10:30)		31. Post-outro (10:15-10:30)	
32. Final chorus (10:30-11:00)		32. Final chorus (10:30-11:00)		32. Final chorus (10:30-11:00)		32. Final chorus (10:30-11:00)	
33. End (11:00-11:15)		33. End (11:00-11:15)		33. End (11:00-11:15)		33. End (11:00-11:15)	
34. Post-outro (11:15-11:30)		34. Post-outro (11:15-11:30)		34. Post-outro (11:15-11:30)		34. Post-outro (11:15-11:30)	
35. Final chorus (11:30-12:00)		35. Final chorus (11:30-12:00)		35. Final chorus (11:30-12:00)		35. Final chorus (11:30-12:00)	
36. End (12:00-12:15)		36. End (12:00-12:15)		36. End (12:00-12:15)		36. End (12:00-12:15)	
37. Post-outro (12:15-12:30)		37. Post-outro (12:15-12:30)		37. Post-outro (12:15-12:30)		37. Post-outro (12:15-12:30)	
38. Final chorus (12:30-13:00)		38. Final chorus (12:30-13:00)		38. Final chorus (12:30-13:00)		38. Final chorus (12:30-13:00)	
39. End (13:00-13:15)		39. End (13:00-13:15)		39. End (13:00-13:15)		39. End (13:00-13:15)	
40. Post-outro (13:15-13:30)		40. Post-outro (13:15-13:30)		40. Post-outro (13:15-13:30)		40. Post-outro (13:15-13:30)	
41. Final chorus (13:30-14:00)		41. Final chorus (13:30-14:00)		41. Final chorus (13:30-14:00)		41. Final chorus (13:30-14:00)	
42. End (14:00-14:15)		42. End (14:00-14:15)		42. End (14:00-14:15)		42. End (14:00-14:15)	
43. Post-outro (14:15-14:30)		43. Post-outro (14:15-14:30)		43. Post-outro (14:15-14:30)		43. Post-outro (14:15-14:30)	
44. Final chorus (14:30-15:00)		44. Final chorus (14:30-15:00)		44. Final chorus (14:30-15:00)		44. Final chorus (14:30-15:00)	
45. End (15:00-15:15)		45. End (15:00-15:15)		45. End (15:00-15:15)		45. End (15:00-15:15)	
46. Post-outro (15:15-15:30)		46. Post-outro (15:15-15:30)		46. Post-outro (15:15-15:30)		46. Post-outro (15:15-15:30)	
47. Final chorus (15:30-16:00)		47. Final chorus (15:30-16:00)		47. Final chorus (15:30-16:00)		47. Final chorus (15:30-16:00)	
48. End (16:00-16:15)		48. End (16:00-16:15)		48. End (16:00-16:15)		48. End (16:00-16:15)	
49. Post-outro (16:15-16:30)		49. Post-outro (16:15-16:30)		49. Post-outro (16:15-16:30)		49. Post-outro (16:15-16:30)	
50. Final chorus (16:30-17:00)		50. Final chorus (16:30-17:00)		50. Final chorus (16:30-17:00)		50. Final chorus (16:30-17:00)	
51. End (17:00-17:15)		51. End (17:00-17:15)		51. End (17:00-17:15)		51. End (17:00-17:15)	
52. Post-outro (17:15-17:30)		52. Post-outro (17:15-17:30)		52. Post-outro (17:15-17:30)		52. Post-outro (17:15-17:30)	
53. Final chorus (17:30-18:00)		53. Final chorus (17:30-18:00)		53. Final chorus (17:30-18:00)		53. Final chorus (17:30-18:00)	
54. End (18:00-18:15)		54. End (18:00-18:15)		54. End (18:00-18:15)		54. End (18:00-18:15)	
55. Post-outro (18:15-18:30)		55. Post-outro (18:15-18:30)		55. Post-outro (18:15-18:30)		55. Post-outro (18:15-18:30)	
56. Final chorus (18:30-19:00)		56. Final chorus (18:30-19:00)		56. Final chorus (18:30-19:00)		56. Final chorus (18:30-19:00)	
57. End (19:00-19:15)		57. End (19:00-19:15)		57. End (19:00-19:15)		57. End (19:00-19:15)	
58. Post-outro (19:15-19:30)		58. Post-outro (19:15-19:30)		58. Post-outro (19:15-19:30)		58. Post-outro (19:15-19:30)	
59. Final chorus (19:30-20:00)		59. Final chorus (19:30-20:00)		59. Final chorus (19:30-20:00)		59. Final chorus (19:30-20:00)	
60. End (20:00-20:15)		60. End (20:00-20:15)		60. End (20:00-20:15)		60. End (20:00-20:15)	
61. Post-outro (20:15-20:30)		61. Post-outro (20:15-20:30)		61. Post-outro (20:15-20:30)		61. Post-outro (20:15-20:30)	
62. Final chorus (20:30-21:00)		62. Final chorus (20:30-21:00)		62. Final chorus (20:30-21:00)		62. Final chorus (20:30-21:00)	
63. End (21:00-21:15)		63. End (21:00-21:15)		63. End (21:00-21:15)		63. End (21:00-21:15)	
64. Post-outro (21:15-21:30)		64. Post-outro (21:15-21:30)		64. Post-outro (21:15-21:30)		64. Post-outro (21:15-21:30)	
65. Final chorus (21:30-22:00)		65. Final chorus (21:30-22:00)		65. Final chorus (21:30-22:00)		65. Final chorus (21:30-22:00)	
66. End (22:00-22:15)		66. End (22:00-22:15)		66. End (22:00-22:15)		66. End (22:00-22:15)	
67. Post-outro (22:15-22:30)		67. Post-outro (22:15-22:30)		67. Post-outro (22:15-22:30)		67. Post-outro (22:15-22:30)	
68. Final chorus (22:30-23:00)		68. Final chorus (22:30-23:00)		68. Final chorus (22:30-23:00)		68. Final chorus (22:30-23:00)	
69. End (23:00-23:15)		69. End (23:00-23:15)		69. End (23:00-23:15)		69. End (23:00-23:15)	
70. Post-outro (23:15-23:30)		70. Post-outro (23:15-23:30)		70. Post-outro (23:15-23:30)		70. Post-outro (23:15-23:30)	
71. Final chorus (23:30-24:00)		71. Final chorus (23:30-24:00)		71. Final chorus (23:30-24:00)		71. Final chorus (23:30-24:00)	
72. End (24:00-24:15)		72. End (24:00-24:15)		72. End (24:00-24:15)		72. End (24:00-24:15)	
73. Post-outro (24:15-24:30)		73. Post-outro (24:15-24:30)		73. Post-outro (24:15-24:30)		73. Post-outro (24:15-24:30)	
74. Final chorus (24:30-25:00)		74. Final chorus (24:30-25:00)		74. Final chorus (24:30-25:00)		74. Final chorus (24:30-25:00)	
75. End (25:00-25:15)		75. End (25:00-25:15)		75. End (25:00-25:15)		75. End (25:00-25:15)	
76. Post-outro (25:15-25:30)		76. Post-outro (25:15-25:30)		76. Post-outro (25:15-25:30)		76. Post-outro (25:15-25:30)	
77. Final chorus (25:30-26:00)		77. Final chorus (25:30-26:00)		77. Final chorus (25:30-26:00)		77. Final chorus (25:30-26:00)	
78. End (26:00-26:15)		78. End (26:00-26:15)		78. End (26:00-26:15)		78. End (26:00-26:15)	
79. Post-outro (26:15-26:30)		79. Post-outro (26:15-26:30)		79. Post-outro (26:15-26:30)		79. Post-outro (26:15-26:30)	
80. Final chorus (26:30-27:00)		80. Final chorus (26:30-27:00)		80. Final chorus (26:30-27:00)		80. Final chorus (26:30-27:00)	
81. End (27:00-27:15)		81. End (27:00-27:15)		81. End (27:00-27:15)		81. End (27:00-27:15)	
82. Post-outro (27:15-27:30)		82. Post-outro (27:15-27:30)		82. Post-outro (27:15-27:30)		82. Post-outro (27:15-27:30)	
83. Final chorus (27:30-28:00)		83. Final chorus (27:30-28:00)		83. Final chorus (27:30-28:00)		83. Final chorus (27:30-28:00)	
84. End (28:00-28:15)		84. End (28:00-28:15)		84. End (28:00-28:15)		84. End (28:00-28:15)	
85. Post-outro (28:15-28:30)		85. Post-outro (28:15-28:30)		85. Post-outro (28:15-28:30)		85. Post-outro (28:15-28:30)	
86. Final chorus (28:30-29:00)		86. Final chorus (28:30-29:00)		86. Final chorus (28:30-29:00)		86. Final chorus (28:30-29:00)	
87. End (29:00-29:15)		87. End (29:00-29:15)		87. End (29:00-29:15)		87. End (29:00-29:15)	
88. Post-outro (29:15-29:30)		88. Post-outro (29:15-29:30)		88. Post-outro (29:15-29:30)		88. Post-outro (29:15-29:30)	
89. Final chorus (29:30-30:00)		89. Final chorus (29:30-30:00)		89. Final chorus (29:30-30:00)		89. Final chorus (29:30-30:00)	
90. End (30:00-30:15)		90. End (30:00-30:15)		90. End (30:00-30:15)		90. End (30:00-30:15)	
91. Post-outro (30:15-30:30)		91. Post-outro (30:15-30:30)		91. Post-outro (30:15-30:30)		91. Post-outro (30:15-30:30)	
92. Final chorus (30:30-31:00)		92. Final chorus (30:30-31:00)		92. Final chorus (30:30-31:00)		92. Final chorus (30:30-31:00)	
93. End (31:00-31:15)		93. End (31:00-31:15)		93. End (31:00-31:15)		93. End (31:00-31:15)	
94. Post-outro (31:15-31:30)		94. Post-outro (31:15-31:30)		94. Post-outro (31:15-31:30)		94. Post-outro (31:15-31:30)	
95. Final chorus (31:30-32:00)		95. Final chorus (31:30-32:00)		95. Final chorus (31:30-32:00)		95. Final chorus (31:30-32:00)	
96. End (32:00-32:15)		96. End (32:00-32:15)		96. End (32:00-32:15)		96. End (32:00-32:15)	
97. Post-outro (32:15-32:30)		97. Post-outro (32:15-32:30)		97. Post-outro (32:15-32:30)		97. Post-outro (32:15-32:30)	
98. Final chorus (32:30-33:00)		98. Final chorus (32:30-33:00)		98. Final chorus (32:30-33:00)		98. Final chorus (32:30-33:00)	
99. End (33:00-33:15)		99. End (33:00-33:15)		99. End (33:00-33:15)		99. End (33:00-33:15)	
100. Post-outro (33:15-33:30)		100. Post-outro (33:15-33:30)		100. Post-outro (33:15-33:30)		100. Post-outro (33:15-33:30)	
101. Final chorus (33:30-34:00)		101. Final chorus (33:30-34:00)		101. Final chorus (33:30-34:00)		101. Final chorus (33:30-34:00)	
102. End (34:00-34:15)		102. End (34:00-34:15)		102. End (34:00-34:15)		102. End (34:00-34:15)	
103. Post-outro (34:15-34:30)		103. Post-outro (34:15-34:30)		103. Post-outro (34:15-34:30)		103. Post-outro (34:15-34:30)	
104. Final chorus (34:30-35:00)		104. Final chorus (34:30-35:00)		104. Final chorus (34:30-35:00)		104. Final chorus (34:30-35:00)	
105. End (35:00-35:15)		105. End (35:00-35:15)		105. End (35:00-35:15)		105. End (35:00-35:15)	
106. Post-outro (35:15-35:30)		106. Post-outro (35:15-35:30)		106. Post-outro (35:15-35:30)		106. Post-outro (35:15-35:30)	
107. Final chorus (35:30-36:00)		107. Final chorus (35:30-36:00)		107. Final chorus (35:30-36:00)		107. Final chorus (35:30-36:00)	
108. End (36:00-36:15)		108. End (36:00-36:15)		108. End (36:00-36:15)		108. End (36:00-36:15)	
109. Post-outro (36:15-36:30)		109. Post-outro (36:15-36:30)		109. Post-outro (36:15-36:30)		109. Post-outro (36:15-36:30)	
110. Final chorus (36:30-37:00)		110. Final chorus (36:30-37:00)		110. Final chorus (36:30-37:00)		110. Final chorus (36:30-37:00)	
111. End (37:00-37:15)		111. End (37:00-37:15)		111. End (37:00-37:15)		111. End (37:00-37:15)	
112. Post-outro (37:15-37:30)		112. Post-outro (37:15-37:30)		112. Post-outro (37:15-37:30)		112. Post-outro (37:15-37:30)	
113. Final chorus (37:30-38:00)		113. Final chorus (37:30-38:00)		113. Final chorus (37:30-38:00)		113. Final chorus (37:30-38:00)	
114. End (38:00-38:15)		114. End (38:00-38:15)		114. End (38:00-38:15)		114. End (38:00-38:15)	
115. Post-outro (38:15-38:30)		115. Post-outro (38:15-38:30)		115. Post-outro (38:15-38:30)		115. Post-outro (38:15-38:30)	
116. Final chorus (38:30-39:00)		116. Final chorus (38:30-39:00)		116. Final chorus (38:30-39:00)		116. Final chorus (38:30-39:00)	
117. End (39:00-39:15)		117. End (39:00-39:15)		117. End (39:00-39:15)		117. End (39:00-39:15)	
118. Post-outro (39:15-39:30)		118. Post-outro (39:15-39:30)		118. Post-outro (39:15-39:30)		118. Post-outro (39:15-39:30)	
119. Final chorus (39:30-40:00)		119. Final chorus (39:30-40:00)		119. Final chorus (39:30-40:00)		119. Final chorus (39:30-40:00)	

Artist	Nationality	Track name	Release date	Genre	O'all length	BPM	Length in secs	No. Breaks	No. Segment	Intro	S1	B1	S2	B2	S3	B3	S4	B4	S5	B5	S6	B6	S7	B7	S8	B8	S9	B9	S10	B10	S11	B11	S12	Outro		
Spatum Minculus	Belgian Austrian	Scandinavian Pony	01/09/2015	Dark/Experimental	6:26	180	386	9	10	36	20	1	26	1	53	11	14	2	20	4	10	1	35	2	47	1	18	3	55	0	0	0	0	0	26	
Mental Attack	Brazilian	Inner Jungle	31/09/2015	ProgressiveZenon esque	7:35	135	455	4	5	27	167	5	56	56	57	1	28	1	27	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	40	
Scoreb	British	Muldod (Reanimated Remix)			6:28	145	388	10	11	10	40	1	12	2	68	2	12	2	25	2	24	4	53	2	27	2	25	2	24	3	30	0	0	0	16	
Sonic Species	British	Just Another Freak			6:51	140	411	9	10	27	26	1	12	2	25	3	53	36	25	2	41	14	24	3	53	2	26	2	16	0	0	0	0	0	18	
Pymmetrix	British	Experiment	22/12/2014	London Full-On	6:52	146	412	4	5	13	43	65	105	20	51	2	51	1	52	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	
Act Ore	British	Dickley Squit	15/12/2014	Full-on/Twilight	7:19	150	439	3	4	25	102	3	75	2	75	27	115	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	
Tristan	British	Talking Technocolor			7:11	136	443	5	6	58	49	2	25	7	54	2	19	1	35	2	43	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	15	
Antispin	British	Neuroplasm Bewilderbaast (remix)	02/07/2012		7:26	145	446	6	6	54	50	3	67	12	66	1	39	14	26	14	51	1	40	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	
Souble Sounds	British	Geometrees	31/1/2015	ProgressivePsy/tr eeks	7:27	146	447	2	3	0	13	11	137	7	272	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Laughing Buddha	British	Shiva Sunrise			7:36	145	456	3	4	26	25	2	172	20	91	1	106	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	13	
Fagin's Reject	British	Goat Leg	31/12/2012	Full-on/Twilight	8:12	148	492	3	3	14	25	1	50	2	52	6	338	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	
Anugoo	British	Dream Pie	11/07/2015	ProgressiveZenon esque	8:32	135	512	4	5	0	51	6	50	6	254	2	23	6	111	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Pillax	British	Goblins Are My Piano	2015	Full-On/progressive	8:45	145	525	6	7	79	76	4	66	3	51	2	23	3	26	27	78	2	53	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	22
Dicksier	British	One and Together			9:26	145	566	11	12	53	24	2	25	1	26	1	26	1	50	2	12	2	24	2	66	14	51	2	24	2	65	1	69	11	11	
Jolum	British	Jokunheim	15/07/2013	Forest	7:13	148	445	1	2	26	115	1	274	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	17	
Proxeus	French	All the Mountains of Madness	14/07/2015	NecGao	8:12	147	492	4	5	13	104	18	39	7	91	13	92	6	97	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	12	
Mindplex	German	Prog Riot (Zenauri Remix)	06/09/2015	ProgressiveFull-On	6:40	138	400	4	5	28	54	1	27	1	42	15	68	28	97	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	39	
Ethnos of Space	Greek	Molecules	26/07/2015	Full-On/Morning Forest	7:41	142	461	6	7	2	52	15	93	15	37	2	27	15	27	14	7	14	40	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	41
Shlilashursuke	Japanese	Both	04/02/2015	Forest	10:48	147	648	5	6	26	40	6	29	3	64	40	86	103	31	2	149	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	69	
Zlog	Lithuanian	Lovin Creatures	05/07/2015	MorningForest	7:01	148	421	4	5	13	37	2	24	1	23	3	91	13	181	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	33	
Ken Zo	Mauritian Australian	Le Réve D'un Fou	10/09/2015	ProgressiveZenon esque	9:04	128	544	1	2	58	182	29	243	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	36	
Psynga	Portuguese	Vertigo	15/09/2015	DarkForest/Hi-Tech	7:56	155	476	3	4	25	31	2	37	4	105	19	242	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	11	
Jacksource	South African	Mycelium Flu	01/06/2015	Full-On/Twilight	9:18	147	558	3	4	32	235	2	4	47	47	5	175	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	11	
BlackStarFna le	Spanish	The Star Cloister	21/06/2013	Goa	8:45	144	525	3	4	27	225	1	17	2	158	2	81	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	
Umili	Turkish	Love is a Frequency	07/10/2015	Full-On/Goa	9:07	152	547	3	4	12	11	2	235	6	65	6	196	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	14	
Overall mean average					145	145	476	5	6																											

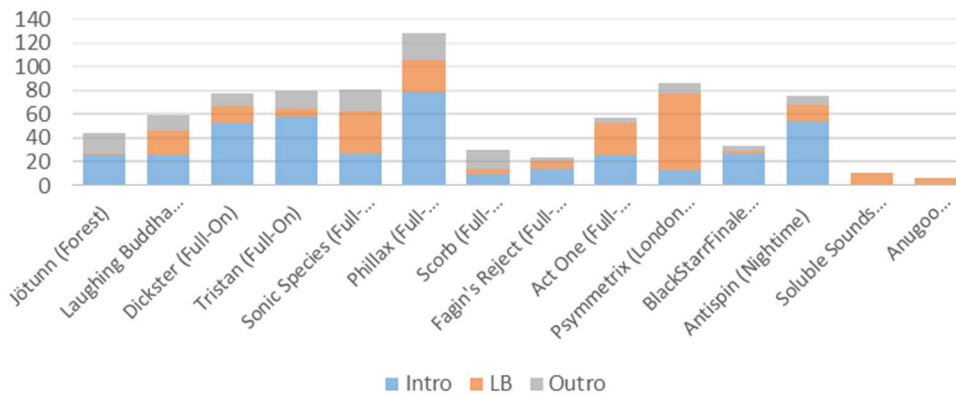
Longest breakdown

Artist	Nationality	Region	Track name	Genre	Key	Metre	Overall length	BPM	Length in Seconds	No. Breaks	No. Segments	Longest break (secs)	Intro	S1	B1	S2	B2	S3	B3	S4	B4	S5	B5	S6	B6	S7	B7	S8	B8	S9	B9	S10	B10	S11	B11	S12	Outro	
Johann	British	London	Johanneim	Forest	?	4/4	7:13	148	445	1	2	1	26	115	1	274	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	17
Laughing Buddha	British	Somerset	Shiva Sunrise	Full-on	C	4/4	7:36	145	456	3	4	20	26	25	2	172	20	91	1	106	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	13
Dickster	British	London	One and Together	Full-On	B \flat	4/4	9:26	145	566	11	12	14	53	24	2	25	1	26	1	26	1	50	2	12	2	24	2	66	14	51	2	24	2	65	1	69	11	
Tristan	British	London	Talking Technocolor	Full-on	G	4/4	7:11	136	443	5	6	7	58	49	2	25	7	54	2	19	1	35	2	43	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	15
Sonic Species	British	London	Just Another Freak	Full-On/Morning	G	4/4	6:51	140	411	9	10	36	27	26	1	12	2	25	3	53	36	25	2	41	14	24	3	53	2	26	2	16	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	18	
Philax	British	Bristol	Godlins Are My Piano	Full-On/Progressive	Dm	4/4	8:45	145	525	6	7	27	79	76	4	66	3	51	2	23	3	26	27	78	2	53	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	22
Scorb	British	Brighton	Muloid (Reanimated Remix)	Full-On/Tech	E \flat	4/4	6:28	145	388	10	11	4	10	40	1	12	2	68	2	12	2	25	2	24	4	53	2	27	2	25	2	24	3	30	n/a	n/a	16	
Fagin's Reject	British	London	Goat Leg	Full-on/Twilight	F \sharp m	4/4	8:12	148	492	3	3	6	14	25	1	50	2	52	6	338	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	4
Act One	British	Northern England	Diddey Squit	Full-on/Twilight	Fm	4/4	7:19	150	439	3	4	27	25.6	102	3	75	2	75	27	115	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	4
Paymetix	British	London	Experiment	London Full-On	F \sharp	4/4	6:52	146	412	4	5	65	13	43	65	105	20	51	2	51	1	52	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	8
BlackStarfish	Spanish	London	The Star Cloister	Goa	?	4/4	8:45	144	525	3	4	2	27	225	1	17	2	158	2	81	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	4
Antispin	British	Brighton	Neuroplasm Bewilderbeast (remix)	Nighttime	D \sharp m	4/4	7:26	145	446	6	6	14	54	50	3	67	12	66	1	39	14	26	14	51	1	40	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	8
Soluble Sounds	British	Wales	Geometrees	Progressive/Psych	Cm	4/4	7:27	146	447	2	3	11	0	13	11	137	7	272	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	0
Amungo	British	Bristol	Dream Pie	Progressive/Zen	Cm	4/4	8:32	135	512	4	5	6	0	51	6	50	6	254	2	23	6	111	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	0
Overall mean average									145	465	5	6	17																									

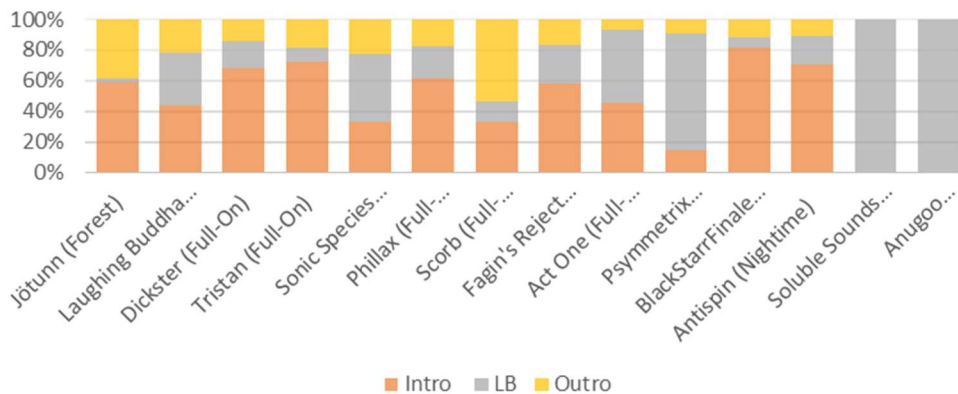
Non-British Tracks: Temporal Analysis

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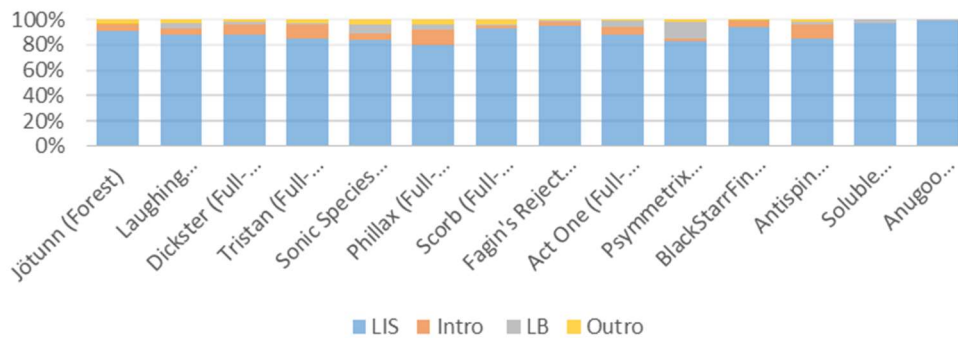
BRITISH: INTRO, OUTRO & LONGEST BREAK



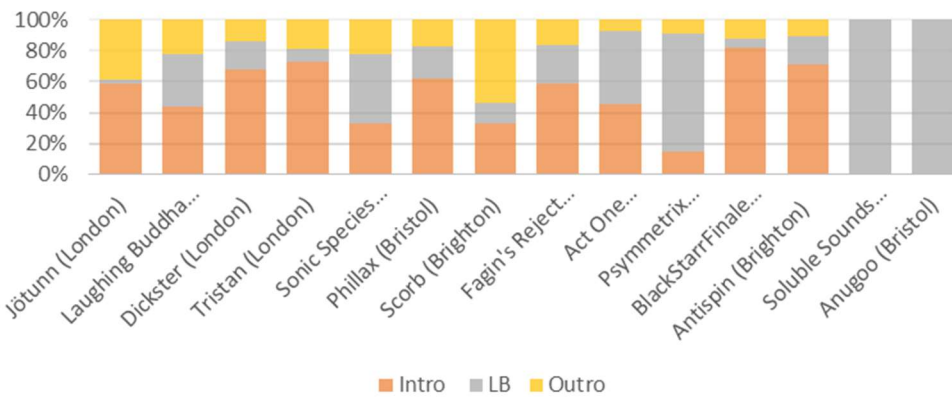
INTRO, LONGEST BREAK AND OUTRO AS PERCENTAGE (SECS.)



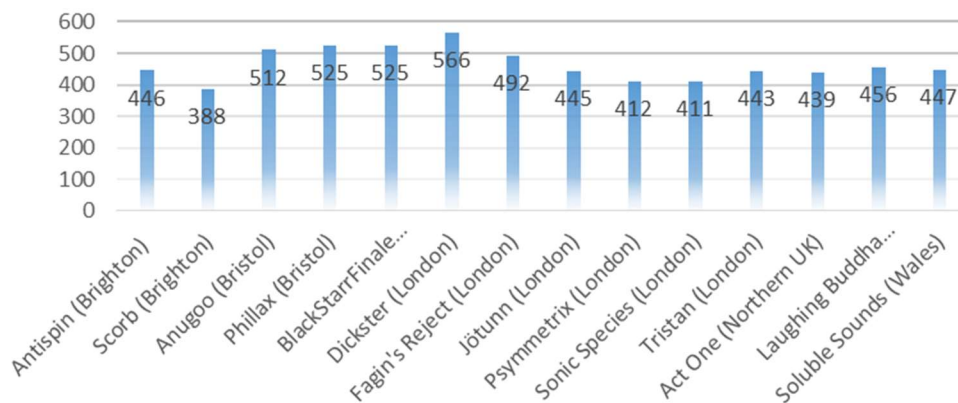
INTRO, LONGEST BREAK AND OUTRO AS PERCENTAGE OF TRACK LENGTH (SECS.)



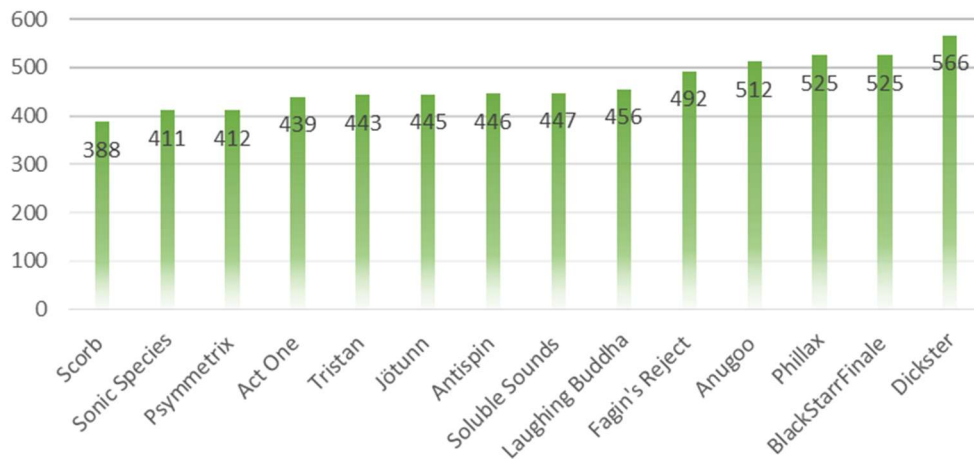
REGION & LENGTHS OF INTRO, LONGEST BREAK AND OUTRO (SECS)



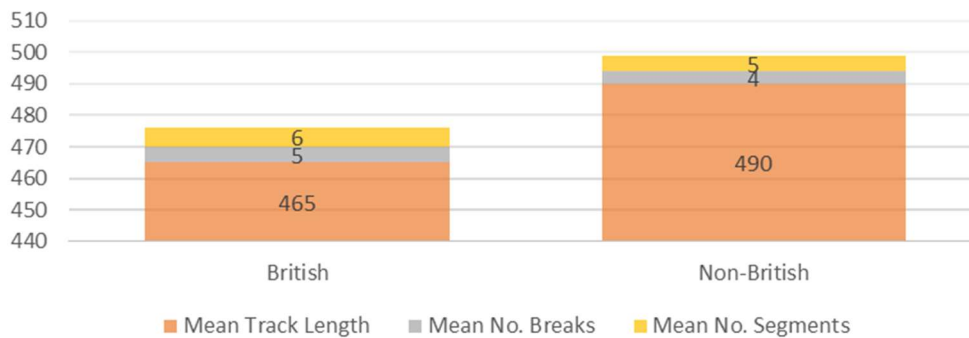
BRITISH: REGION & TRACK LENGTH (SECS.)



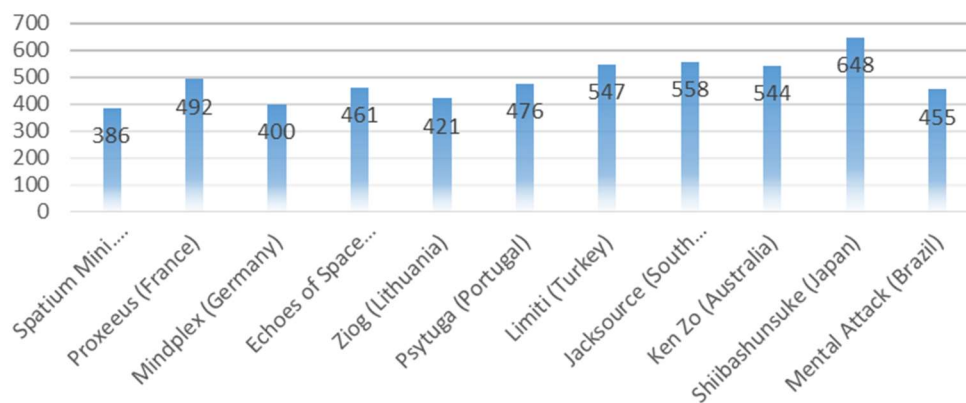
BRITISH TRACK LENGTHS (SECS.)



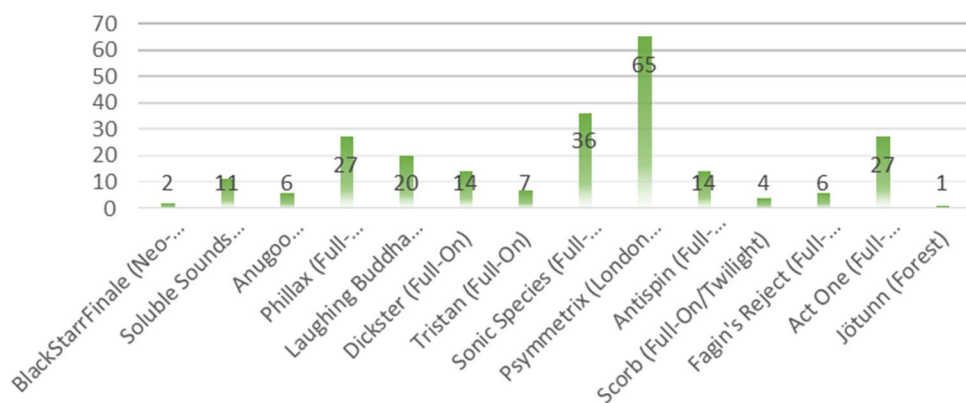
BRITISH V. NON-BRITISH MEAN TRACK LENGTH, NO. BREAKS AND NO. SEGMENTS (SECS.)



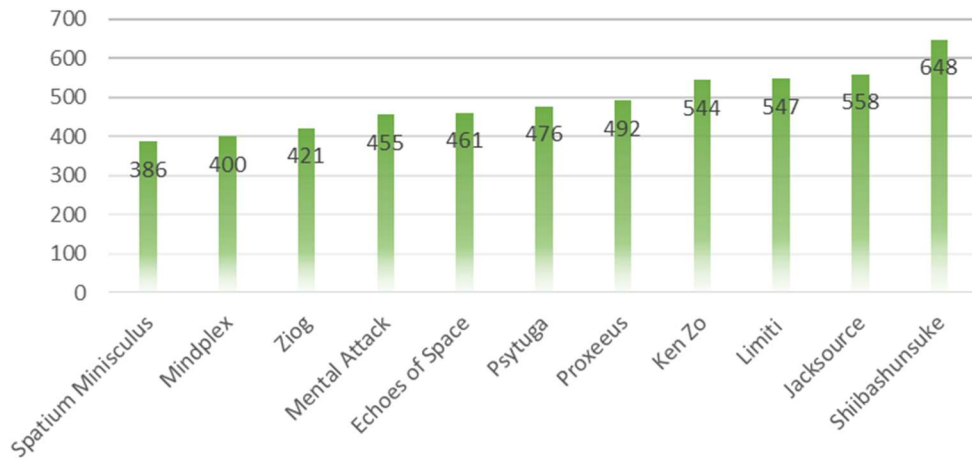
NON-BRITISH: REGION & TRACK LENGTH (SECS.)



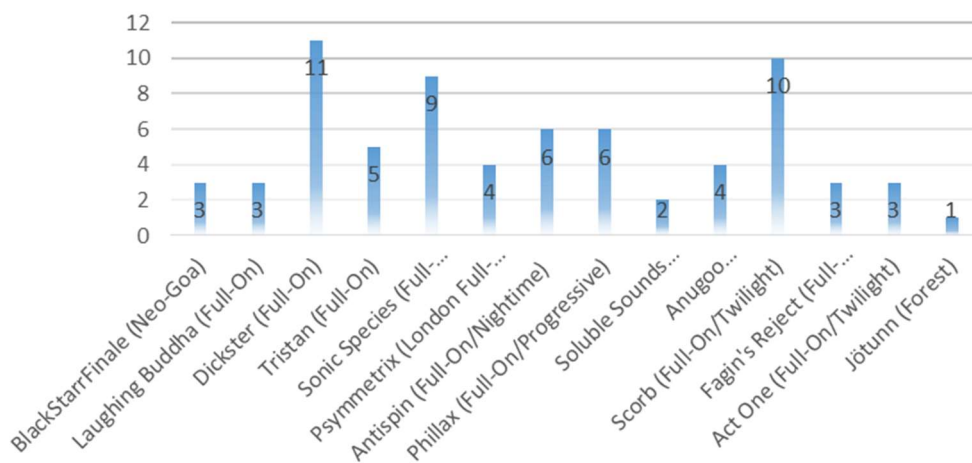
BRITISH: LONGEST BREAK IN TRACK (SECS.)



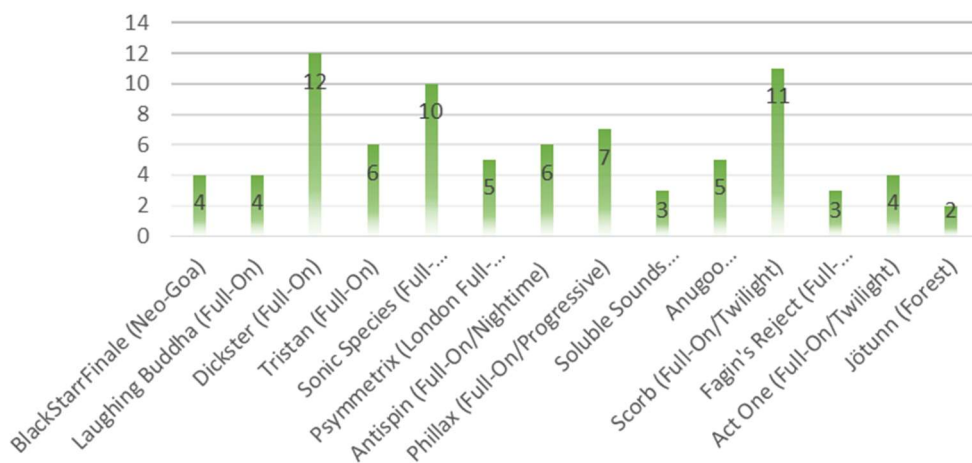
NON-BRITISH: TRACK LENGTH (SECS.)

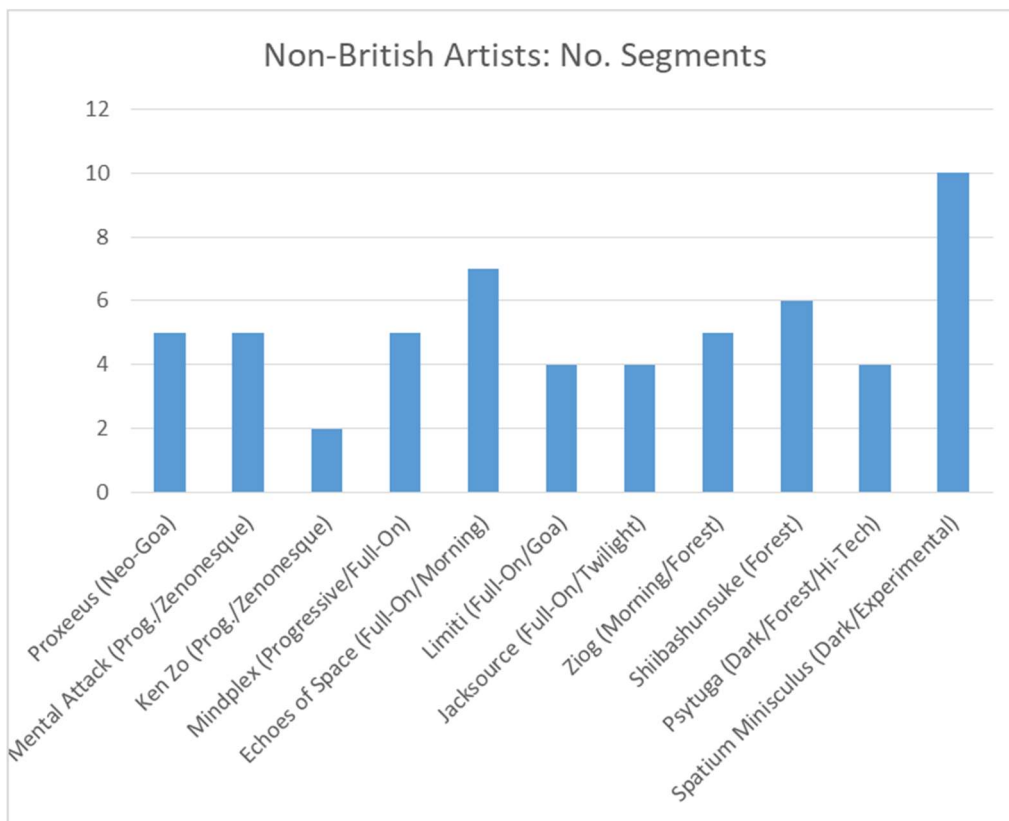
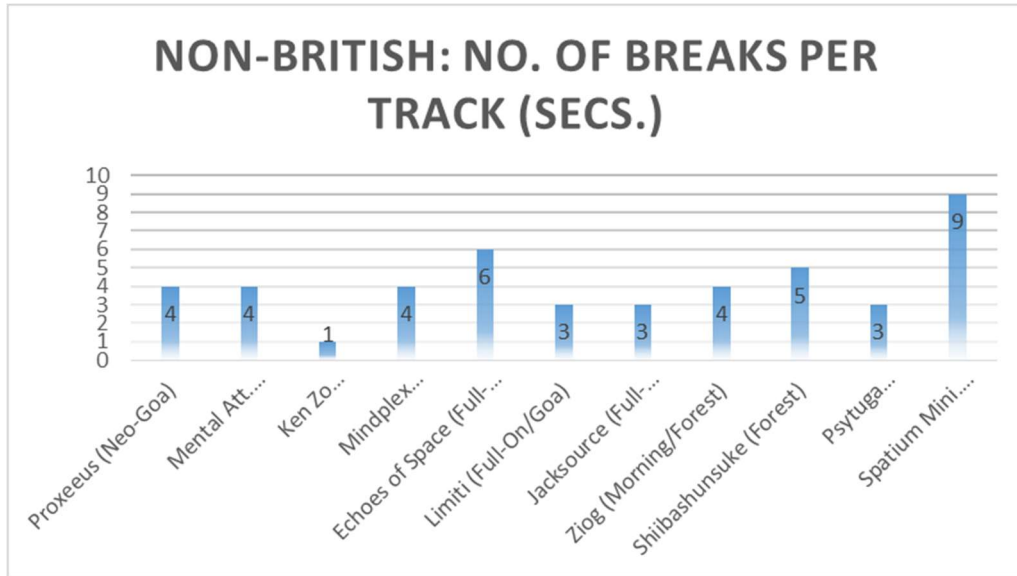


BRITISH: NO. BREAKS PER TRACK



BRITISH: NO. SEGMENTS PER TRACK





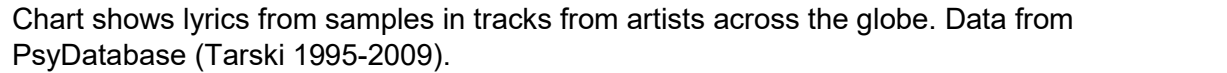
[illegible]

Chart shows lyrics from samples in tracks from artists across the globe. Data from PsyDatabase (Tarski 1995-2009).

Chart shows lyrics from samples in tracks from British artists. Data from PsyDatabase (Tarski 1995-2009).

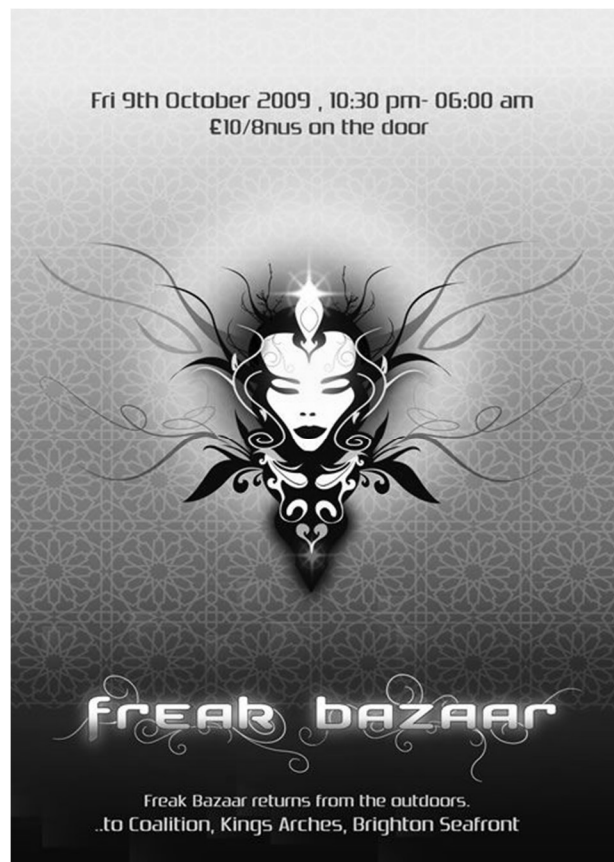


Chart shows lyrics from samples in tracks from non-British artists. Data from PsyDatabase (Tarski 1995-2009).

5. Décor and Ephemera Examples



An official photograph of the Liquid Stage from Noisily 2016, by Samantha Leigh Scholl.



A womb or vulva-like shape in the work of visionary artist Stewart Griggs, who designed the flyers for the Freak Bazaar crew.



Flyer for a forest psy party in London, featuring the Green Man of British folklore.

APPENDIX B

Questionnaire and Interview Design

1. Questionnaire Design

The online survey was done via survey monkey and the responses were imported into QSR NVivo, a CAR (Computer Assisted Research) qualitative research software, for analysis. I contacted potential participants by inviting them on Facebook, Twitter and also by posting in forums such as Psymusic.co.uk, Isratrance and others. The invitation linked to my Wordpress blog where more details concerning the research were provided along with a link to the Surveymonkey site. Documents concerning how the project was structured, the subject area and how information would be used were provided on the blog post, along with instructions on how to consent to participate, by completing the final question within the Surveymonkey questionnaire. Participants were advised that the survey was confidential and that they could withdraw their consent to participate at any time by navigating away from the Surveymonkey site. I then logged into the Surveymonkey questionnaire periodically and deleted the incomplete surveys.

Moving on to the content of the online questionnaire: there were some extra questions in the producer interviews that were not in the survey because I wanted a more detailed response, or because they were not straightforward and may have needed some discussion around them with the participant to make sure there was understanding on both sides - something it is not possible to do in an online questionnaire. The online survey was limited to 10 questions and one of these had to be devoted to obtaining consent from the participants on how the information could be used, whilst questions 1-4 were spent establishing basic details about the participants. So taking into account the 5 questions establishing case details and consent, there were 5 left to ask participants about their music.

As Arksey notes, it is important that questions are well designed because bad questions will produce bad data (1999). The online survey questions were therefore worded carefully, largely following guidance by Sue & Ritter (2012), who helpfully list the basics for survey questions which assist in making them understood by participants for example, asking questions in full sentences ("What is your age?" rather than "Age?"), keeping questions succinct and asking one question at a time wherever possible, rather than having questions with multiple parts (Sue & Ritter, 2012). The online survey was completely anonymous and in addition to this, in order to collect case data whilst being sensitive about personal details I included a range of ages and included an option of 'n/a or rather not say' under gender. I wanted to have this information to see if gender or age factored into what participants viewed as 'psychedelic' and what their creative practices were. This was in order to answer the question about how local culture may feed into regional music styles and obviously gender and age have different connotations in different cultures. I then wanted to find out whether participants were British or not, and if not British, where they were from. This was so I could divide up the data into British and Non-British and see if they had characteristics particular to those categories. I asked whether they were resident in the UK as the psytrance scene is very international and has developed and spread through travel and nomadic lifestyles, so it was likely that there would be Non-British producers answering the questionnaire who lived in the UK and may be influenced by the culture there. I made the question about whether they were a DJ or producer as inclusive as possible, as I wanted responses from people at any level of proficiency in writing or DJing psytrance and also

responses from people who perhaps had written or DJd psytrance in the past but had moved on to other genres - both interesting perspectives offering a potential formative or critical response that may not have otherwise been forthcoming.

1. What is your age?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 18-23 ▪ 24-29 ▪ 29-35 ▪ 36-44 ▪ 45-54 ▪ 55-64 ▪ 65+
2. What is your gender?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Male ▪ Female ▪ N/A or rather not say
3. What is your nationality?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ British ▪ Other (please state nationality and whether you are resident in the UK)
4. Are you a psytrance DJ or producer (whether full-time, as a hobby, currently or in the past)?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Psytrance DJ ▪ Psytrance Producer ▪ Psytrance DJ & Producer
5. What is the name of the software and/or hardware that you use?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ DAW/MIDI sequencer (e.g. Ableton Live, Logic Pro etc.) ▪ Computer type (PC/Mac, Dell/HP etc.) ▪ VST Plug-ins (e.g. NI Massive, NI Reaktor, Sylenth1 etc.) ▪ MIDI controller/instrument ▪ Turntables (e.g. Digital- CDJs/USB, analogue- vinyl etc.) ▪ Portable audio sampler/recorder
6. What is the name of your favourite psytrance producer?
7. Which elements of psytrance music make it sound psychedelic?
8. Describe the situation that most helps you to be creative when working on your music. (E.g. Location, on your own or with friends, state of mind, time of day, substance use etc.)
9. Thinking about all the psytrance that you have heard from anywhere in the world, do you think that certain styles or sub-genres can be linked to certain geographical locations? If yes, can you please give an example?

The aim of my qualitative research study was primarily to ask what 'psychedelic' means to British psytrance producers and whether there is a British psychedelicality which gives British psytrance music a distinct character. I asked producers how they compose their music, including their creative processes, what technologies they use and what inspires them. DJs were asked how they choose tracks and mix them for their performance sets, again looking at creative processes and working practices. I spoke with DJs and producers about how trends in British psytrance have changed over time and how notions of psychedelicality in the music have evolved.

Questions 5-9 also appear in the one-to-one interviews, though they are worded in a simplified way for the online survey as there is no opportunity to ask for clarification on a question in the online format and also because for many people the written format can involve more cognitive exertion than oral communication (see further reasoning below). The rationale for these five questions appearing in the online survey and the one to one interviews will be discussed first and then the questions specific to the one to one interviews will be addressed.

When asking about the hardware in question 5 (question 3 in the one to one interviews - see list below), I thought it may be possible to gather more information about the producer or DJ's creative practice, as different software and hardware represent different ways of working, some more experimental or intuitive and some more structured. For example, Ableton Live is considered more intuitive than Logic Pro, due to its arrangement screen, which takes you away from a linear representation of the track you are working on and allows you to try out bits of thematic material and improvise with them like playing a musical instrument so that you can decide how you want the track to progress. Another example would be whether a producer was using pre-set sounds or engineering their own sounds which might indicate whether they were working in a very detailed and technical way or focussing on the arrangement of the track as a whole in a way similar to composers working in any musical style. The questions relating to creative practise and to hardware and software and how they shape the creative process were influenced by the work of Gelineck and Serafin (2009). Their paper explores 'unpredictable' versus intuitive styles of composition and the concepts of 'explorer' and 'worker' approaches to writing. Compatibility with other systems was important as was being able to adjust the interface and creativity arose from the unpredictableness of software that interplayed with the ideas of the composer to trigger new ideas - both similar findings to those of Bertelsen et al (2009).

Question 6 (question 12 in the one to one interviews) asks about their favourite producer, but gives space for an extended answer to capture any other comments they have or provide several artists if necessary. This question was asked in order to find out what nationality the favourite artists are and see if that influences their musical style. The thinking behind the question is to do with the first research question; looking for a mechanism by which global style influences local style and vice versa. If an artist from a particular region influences the composition style of an artist from another region, this could be a means by which that cultural exchange occurs.

Question 7 (question 8 in the one to one interviews) addresses the second research question, looking at whether there are different kinds of 'psychedelicness' - a particular psychedelic quality to the music that is specific to a particular location. This also goes towards answering the first research question as if countries or regions have their own 'psychedelicness' this is another indication of a local style that can be differentiated from other regional styles. The responses to this question, along with the responses to this same question from the one-to-one interviews with producers, were analysed using QSR nVivo. They were coded (categorised) under the following parent nodes (categories) and child nodes (sub-categories), which I decided upon after an initial read-through of the data. The child nodes were formulated from the participants' responses and I tried to make them quite specific so as to be led by the data whilst coding. There is some researcher bias with these of course, especially where I grouped together several similar words that appeared in responses e.g. under 'composition techniques', where a child node is listed as 'soundscape, landscape, atmosphere'. The mark of the researcher is more apparent in the parent node categories, where a large group of child nodes are brought together under each one.

Artist or subgenre mentioned

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Intention of producer ▪ Liveness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Particular subgenres or artists
Audio techniques	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Amplitude Modulation ▪ Audio techniques - general reference ▪ Automation ▪ Creative, Interesting and-or Skilled Sound Design ▪ Delay, feedback delay or grain delay ▪ Filters ▪ Flangers ▪ Formants ▪ Frequency Modulation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Granulation ▪ LFOs ▪ Modulation ▪ Panning ▪ Phase ▪ Resonance ▪ Reverb ▪ Sound Design
Brain, mind or spiritual	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Brain, mind, acceleration, elevated consciousness ▪ Inner journey, introspection, imagination or mind manifestation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Spirituality, shamanic, vibration ▪ Trance induction and hypnosis
Composition techniques	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Composition- general reference ▪ Conveying message or meaning ▪ Harmony, harmonic coherence ▪ Melodies ▪ Non-Western culture references ▪ Novelty, shock or surprise ▪ Repetition or loops 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Soundscape, landscape, atmosphere ▪ Subtlety, nuance ▪ Telling a story, narrative, aural journey ▪ Tension and release ▪ Track structure or arrangement ▪ Using the full frequency spectrum
Embodied experience, effect on listener body	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Communitas whilst dancing to the music ▪ Induces emotional response ▪ Liquid, wet sounds, bubbling, squelches, body noises ▪ PAS use 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Recreating the PAS experience ▪ Synaesthesia, colours, shapes, patterns, geometric ▪ Tactile, texture, felt in the body
Instrumentation, voices or layers	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Any element excluding bassline ▪ Bassline, kick drum ▪ Drone or ostinato ▪ Glitches ▪ Groove ▪ High frequency sounds ▪ Layers ▪ Leads 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Long 'space-like' sounds or pads ▪ Rhythm, percussion ▪ Roland 303 or 808 ▪ Samples ▪ Sound Effects ▪ Synths ▪ 'Typical' trippy or enigmatic psy sounds - general reference
No answer, subjective etc.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ No, no answer or not sure ▪ Subjective or linked to expectations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Undefinable
Qualities or moods	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Abstractness ▪ Artificiality, other, other worldly, synthetic ▪ Complexity, Intricacy ▪ Experimental, unpredictable, original, irregular, free thinking stream of consciousness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Playfulness, trickery, magic or cheeky humour ▪ Twistedness, subversion ▪ Uplifting mood
Space, time, movement, direction	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Fat, deep ▪ Flow, continuous movement ▪ Forward movement, driving movement ▪ Gradual, building, growing introduction & change of sounds & themes ▪ Many moving elements ▪ Rolling, e.g. rolling bassline 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Sense of movement ▪ Sense of space, depth ▪ Sounds which change over time or drawn out sounds ▪ Spiralling ▪ Sweeping ▪ Twisting

Question 8 (question 7 in the one to one interviews) explores this further, providing insight into what influences artists in their day to day practise, something that may be very personal with each individual or for which there might be a particular trend in a specific region. I was influenced by Bennett in looking at composer's embodied experience (1976). He interviewed composers and investigated the required conditions for composition to take place, the process of composition and posited types of composition/composer as 'inspirational' or 'working'. One of Bennett's interviewees mentions how composition is almost a meditation and the paper quotes Bernstein who describes his process more explicitly as a trance state. This seems to fit the 'inspirational' type of composer/composition and is very relevant to the composition of psychedelic trance in that the purpose of the music is to induce or enhance a trance state.

One of the questions I posed for this study was whether there might be a predominate tendency towards one of these composer/composition types in different regions, one that would go towards a particular psychedelicalness and be involved in the formation of a local style. It was important to me to establish what the experience of the interviewee/respondent was as a composer. This provides a link to the other phenomenological research (the practise based research using Ableton Live and technical forum on Psymusic.co.uk) and also the earlier findings about British psytrance and 'internal body psychedelicalness' in chapter 1 and the psychoactive substance enhanced, trance-dancing body discussed in chapter 2. The prompt included altered psychedelic states among others, in order to give 'permission' for participants to mention this whilst not pushing them to talk about doing something potentially illegal if they preferred not to. I felt it necessary to give this prompt though as producers and DJs of psytrance are after all composing music or sets for a scenario where people will inevitably be under the influence of psychedelic psychoactive substances and where the music which accompanies that experience hopefully enhances it as well.

Question 9 (question 15 in the one to one interviews) aimed to prompt responses about stand out regional styles around the world i.e. the most distinctive ones, and give space for an extended response. I considered asking participants about the British style and scene but

wanted to be careful not to direct participant's answers towards that topic and make them feel that the 'right' answer would be to theorize or reflect on the subject of my research, rather I wished the research to be guided by the participants' responses. As Brinkmann states "Researchers aiming for discovery need to design their research study in such a way that the discovery is not merely an artefact of the study itself" and so it is important to avoid leading questions (2013). The thinking behind looking for descriptive responses rather than theorizations, was this would tell me just as much about the artist's local cultural influences as a direct question relating to their locale would. I aimed to gain understanding by immersing myself in music production culture and practice, to ensure that the research was led by discovery of emergent experiences and grounded in the reality of the practice informed research and life worlds of participants rather than imposing a theorization on the project. The use of this method meant that I could gain more insight without having to be too specific about British or regional styles in the online survey.

Participants in an online survey cannot refute a particular interpretation by an interviewer in the same way as in a one-to-one interview, so the idea was to give participants as much room to justify their answers as possible. The approach to this question in the one-to-one interviews was different as, for example, I asked participants about the British scene directly, but the different mode of interviewing allowed me to seek a nuanced answer and to explain that any or no answer would be satisfactory. This helped me to avoid collecting 'non-attitudes', that is forcing an opinion from the interviewee when they do not have one. Hopefully this method helped to extract genuine points of view uninfluenced by social desirability issues such as the wish to be seen as informed on a subject, or the wish to help me by providing an answer when in fact they have no opinion. I have to say that the one-to-one interviews did become more relaxed and unstructured as the project progressed and I was less cautious about giving my own opinion on psytrance (see next section for details).

The language used in the online survey is also more colloquial and avoids jargon, partly because having advertised the survey on sites like Psyforum and Isratrance with an international membership, I knew that it would be answered by participants whose first language was not English and partly because there is no recourse for seeking clarification on a question on the online survey. Also, as Wengraf points out, it is important to match the idiolect of the participant so as not to distract from the interview questions and the flow of the interview by being 'culturally clumsy' (2001). In addition to this many people do not express themselves in the best way when writing, which can be for a number of reasons, including that they are not used to expressing themselves in writing in everyday life, or have a specific learning difference (SpLD) of some kind. I also did not wish to alienate participants with language that was overly academic (Kvale and Brinkmann 2009, Brinkmann 2013).

2. Interview Design

The seven one-to-one interviewees were contacted by email initially to request an interview. The interviews were either in an informal face-to-face setting or via Skype. Once an interview had been agreed a date and time was arranged and information and consent forms were signed and returned by participants. These questions were only asked to British producers and so were aimed at finding out whether there is a British psychedelicalness in psytrance and what that consists of.

1.	How would you describe the music you write? (E.g. in terms of genre, mood etc.)
2.	How long have you been writing psytrance and how did you get into it?
3.	What software/hardware do you use?
4.	How did you learn to DJ/write music with the software and hardware that you use? (E.g. self-taught, helped by a friend, online videos/tutorials, online forums, a course of some kind etc.)

5.	What is your most typical creative process when you write music? (E.g. structure/planning versus inspirational or exploratory methods.) What does a typical session look like?
6.	To what extent do you use pre-set sounds in your tracks and to what extent sounds you have engineered yourself?
7.	What is your ideal scenario for being creative? (E.g. in terms of state of mind, whether alone or working with other people, psychedelic altered states, location et cetera.)
8.	What elements of the music you write make it psychedelic?
9.	To what extent do you have your audience and/or potential location/venue in mind when working on a track you are writing?
10.	Has your writing style changed over time? How?
11.	Does the music you write reflect your identity? (E.g. personality characteristics, beliefs/outlook, mental state, personal history etc.)
12.	Which artist/artists are you most inspired by? How do they influence your music?
13.	Does culture outside the psytrance scene influence your music? How? What about everyday life, or news about what's happening in the UK?
14.	Has the vibe at the events you play changed over the years? How?
15.	Do styles of psytrance correspond with particular geographic regions? If 'yes', can you give an example that stands out to you?
16.	If you answered 'yes' to question no.15, is there a UK style (or a style which is particular to a wider region that includes the UK)?
17.	If you answered 'yes' to question no.16, how does your music fit into that UK style (or style of a region that includes the UK)?
18.	Are there different styles in different areas of the UK? If so, how do they differ?

Question 1 aimed to find out how the producer or DJ categorized their music in terms of genre and mood, so that this could be compared to their later answers regarding psychedelicality and the influence of wider culture on their music.

Question 2 established the participant's level of experience both in composing psytrance and in the scene itself, as it asks about their motivations prior to beginning their composing/DJing journey.

Question 3 was not asked, as I knew that all the interview participants were British.

Question 4 is another question asking about participant's experience, to aid in my phenomenological analysis of the music and composition process and also to investigate the culture surrounding psytrance composers and DJs. How much assistance did they receive from other people? Is there a competitive atmosphere in the composing community or one based in sharing information, 'buddying' and DIY principles? I hoped to establish whether the UK's portrayal by scholars as a DIY dance music scene holds truth. The extent to which self-learning takes place, whether from free YouTube tutorials or just experimentation, was also of interest as this speaks to what extent the act of learning how to use music software is like learning an acoustic instrument and therefore to what level the act of learning and utilizing music software is an embodied experience. Bertelsen et al (2009) have explored creativity and the use of software from a Human Computer Interaction (HCI) perspective. They propose the concept of 'instrumentness' to describe the man-computer symbiosis involved in the composition of electronic music, because the software can be 'played', has its own sonic quality depending on its programming and what plug-ins can be used with it. It is essentially part of the resulting music that is played, just like a particular acoustic instrument played by a specific person becomes part of the music played, due to the variables in the construction of the instrument and the musician's body and technique which give the resulting performance

a unique character. Other similarities are that one has to discipline oneself to learn the software in order to avail oneself of the full range of capabilities/complexity and to transcend or extend its limitations. A key observation in the paper is that electronic music emerges as a result of 'playing' the software. Another key point was that creativity took place when the composer found themselves not completely in control of the software, so that an element of spontaneity and novelty arose from the 'glitch' in the system (Bertelsen et al. 2009).

Magnusson & Mendieta's (2007) paper found that the use of music software in electronic music composition was more of a mind-brain endeavor than mind-body one, because of the absence of 'natural' mappings between bodily exertion and gestures and the resulting sound. When comparing this to acoustic instrumental playing, whilst the musician was free of all the conventions and history of an acoustic instrument, it was difficult to let go of the brain and get inside the embodied performance. Bennett's study quotes Bernstein saying that he wished for a composition instrument which would record the composition process in his mind, allowing the trance state to be uninterrupted so that the composition could go straight from inspiration to record (Bennett 1976).

Question 5 looked at different modes of composition/composer. As mentioned earlier, the questions relating to creative practice and to hardware and software and how they shape the creative process were influenced by the work of Gelineck and Serafin (2009). They posited 'unpredictable' versus intuitive styles of composition and the concepts of 'explorer' and 'worker' approaches to writing. Bennett also interviewed composers and investigated the required conditions for composition to take place, the process of composition and posited types of composition/composer as 'inspirational' or 'working' so it seemed important to establish these kinds of patterns to see if there are any trends that differ between regional cultures. The thinking behind this question was also that types of words used in the responses would assist in the experiential analysis of the data and assist in the phenomenological perspective mentioned earlier. The plan was for word frequency analysis of all the experiential responses from the interviews, survey and from my practice based research in order to view a 'slice' of the overall data and analyze it from a phenomenological viewpoint.

Question 6 aimed to find out whether the producers interviewed engaged in the engineering of sounds with virtual synthesizer plug-ins (VSTs). The use of these indicates a quite different way of working, one that is painstaking and detailed and speaks to the artist's quest for originality. It also may indicate a focus on the ground, on noise rather than melody and on un-signified rather than signified perhaps. Artists who use only pre-set sounds might be more concerned with overall track structure and more traditional composition techniques and concerns.

Question 9 aims to find out to what extent the artist's music or set is affected by the potential location and audience it is to be played in. The thinking behind this question is whether reception theory may provide a potential mechanism for the transmission of cultural memes between artist and audience. Further to this, I hoped that if that were true, perhaps the culture of the potential location or the background culture of the audience will influence the type of music the artist creates and provide an explanation for how regional styles develop from more global traits and vice versa.

Question 10 was intended to capture whether an artist's style changed over time and whether this was as a result of wider psytrance culture and of wider regional culture, where developments in aesthetics might place different demands on the artist in terms of material that matches prevailing fashions. Combining this with the response from question 14, I also hoped to establish whether there is a thread of psychedelicalness running through the music over time a quality that is separate and discernibly different to sonic trends that come and go over the years and distinctively British in character.

Question 11 looks at personal identity, providing an opportunity for race and gender to be taken into account, should the participant want to mention them. Along with question 13, I also wanted to tease out which influences come from wider culture or from the participant's own personal history, moods and mind-set, thereby helping to establish to what extent outside culture influences the music to create regional styles.

Questions 16-18 ask directly about whether there is a British style and what that might be and also whether there are styles particular to regions within the UK. This direct questioning was avoided in the online survey as mentioned earlier, because I did not wish to force an agenda on the participants by asking leading questions. In this mode of interviewing I felt that this might be more appropriate as it could be added on at the end as an 'out of interest' question and posed in such a tone and with body language to indicate that it was not a given that there is in fact a UK style or regional style and if the participant was hesitant in their answer then reassurances to that effect could be given, avoiding false positives.

All the responses to the online survey and the interviews were imported into QSR nVivo and were 'coded' (a process of gathering material by topic, theme or case) into 'nodes' (containers for coding material that is related). A series of queries were run to analyze the data, for example word frequency queries for a particular question across all interviews and online survey responses. Reports and analysis of the online survey data will follow, then the one to one interviews, the interviews and the survey data combined and finally the combined data will be analyzed and discussed in the light of the results from the tracks analysis and practice based research presented in chapter 3.

I asked producers how they compose their music, including their creative processes, what technologies they use and what inspires them. DJs were asked how they choose tracks and mix them for their performance sets, again looking at creative processes and working practices. I spoke with DJs and producers about how trends in British psytrance have changed over time and how notions of psychedelicalness in the music have evolved. I chose to do interviews and a survey to gather information about Britishness in psytrance music and spoke to producers about their creative practice and what is 'psychedelic' to them about the music they write. The research project was entitled 'Psytrance, Creativity and Psychedelicalness' and the description of it given in the information sheet was almost entirely the internal aims of this particular research project and not the whole thesis, as this obviously mentions 'Britishness' and the global and local - I did not want to unduly influence participant responses by making this information too prominent. Details about how the study fit in to the larger thesis were provided within the information though, in order to be ethical and fully disclose the purpose of the study.

As I mentioned above, my interviews became less structured and more conversational as time went on and I wasn't as careful about not sharing my own views with the interviewee. I felt that I had collected and analyzed data in a more structured way when conducting the online questionnaire and wanted to elicit different responses from interview participants as time went on. I instead tried to tailor my approach to each person I spoke to, for example, if they had an academic background I did not shy away from using some academic terminology or explaining a concept that I wanted to ask about.

In the end, although I looked at the online questionnaire data as a whole, represented it in various ways and let the study as a whole inform my writing, I felt I had too much information to work with in detail. I therefore chose to focus on the responses to the three most pertinent questions about producer's creative process, whether they believed there were regional psytrance styles and what elements of their music they deemed the most psychedelical.

As the interviews progressed I used each to inform my approach to the next, branching out to speak to people with different roles in the UK scene. I went on to conduct five more one-to-one interviews but after reflecting on the data gathered so far and the theory I had been

reading around embodied phenomenology, I recognised two threads of research emerging, one that was focussed on the music, on producers and DJs and the technology they use and another more expanded view, looking at all the sensory experiences to be had at psytrance parties and looking at how stylistic traits are reflected in all the different sensory domains. For this second thread, I needed to speak to people who could describe how the party décor is designed and made and provide insight into how the parties are organised. I also wanted to speak to at least one dancer and/or flow artist, who had specialist vocabulary around those skills and could recount their experiences on psytrance dancefloors in those terms. An approach from embodiment could have included technology as an extension of embodiment, but I felt that this area alone could comprise an entire thesis and I also didn't feel I had learned enough about the technology used to compose the music to write authoritatively about it. Recognising this gradual shift into an approach from embodiment taking in all sensory modes, I expanded the pool of participants to include a décor artist, an artist manager and stage manager, a dancer and flow artist and a long-time scene insider and author. I asked a different set of questions for each interview, which the reader can view in the interview transcripts in Appendix E.

When I analyzed the online questionnaire data together with the interview data in QSR nVivo, I only used the interviews with producers and looked at the same three key questions. Later, I read through each of the seven transcribed one-to-one interviews and analyzed them in detail separately, drew out themes and grouped key quotes under those themes. I then looked at the responses side by side and wrote summaries of the main findings.

APPENDIX C

Ethical Considerations

1. Information Sheets and Consent Forms

I created individual information sheets and consent forms tailored to each interviewee. The forms used for my interview with Robin Triskele are included as examples below.



PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

TITLE OF PROJECT: PSYTRANCE, CREATIVITY AND 'PSYCHEDELICNESS'

You are being invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide whether or not to take part, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY?

- My PhD project is about psychedelic trance music (psytrance). The project is about how different styles of psytrance form in local scenes, starting from the embodied psychedelic experience of the dancefloor and how this might differ from place to place.
- I have already interviewed some psytrance producers about their creative process when writing music and what is psychedelic about their music and party goes about their experiences on the dancefloor. It is really important to also look at the industry aspect though, so I am also hoping to speak to managers, promoters, record labels and party organisers about what they do.
- The researcher will interview you in person and the conversation will be recorded. The interview will take place in April 2017.

WHY HAVE I BEEN INVITED TO PARTICIPATE?

You have been invited to participate because you are somebody who is involved with the UK psytrance scene and the music industry.

DO I HAVE TO TAKE PART?

It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do decide to take part you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a consent form. If you decide to take part you are still free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO ME IF I TAKE PART?

- You will be interviewed by the researcher for around 30 minutes. It will be an unstructured interview, which means there are no set questions and no 'right' answers - it will be more like a chat. This format is important because I want to learn about your experience in your own words.

WHAT ARE THE POSSIBLE DISADVANTAGES AND RISKS OF TAKING PART?

- The interview will take up to 30 minutes of your time.



University of Sussex

CONSENT FORM FOR PROJECT PARTICIPANTS

PROJECT TITLE: PSYTRANCE, CREATIVITY AND
'PSYCHEDELICNESS'

Project Approval
Reference: ER/GLF21/1

I agree to take part in the above University of Sussex research project. I have had the project explained to me and I have read and understood the Information Sheet, which I may keep for records. I understand that agreeing to take part means that I am willing to be interviewed by the researcher and allow the interview to be audio recorded.

Please select one of the following by placing a tick in the box provided:

I prefer to remain anonymous in the final write up of the project. I understand that any information I provide is confidential and that no information that I disclose will lead to the identification of any individual in the final write up of the project, either by the researcher or by any other party.

I understand that I will be given a transcript of my interview for my approval before it is included in the write up of the research.

☐

Or:

I give approval for my name to be used in the final write up of the project and in further publications. I understand that any other information I provide is confidential, and that no information that I disclose will lead to the identification of any individual other than myself in the reports on the project, either by the researcher or by any other party.

I understand that I will be given a transcript of my interview for my approval before it is included in the write up of the research.

☐

Psytrance, creativity and psychedelics 22.04.2017 V1 (GLF)

2. Management of Data

As stated previously, the online questionnaire was anonymized by the SurveyMonkey site, so that numeric identifiers were automatically created and downloaded with the data into NVivo.

In the case of the one-to-one interviews, I sent a transcript to each person for approval, destroying the audio recording of the interview so that they would have full control of the information they chose to provide. Participants edited their transcripts for clarity in some cases and added information that they had thought about since the interview and wanted to include.

Interviewees were given the option of being anonymous or providing their name – two chose to be identified by a pseudonym and the others were comfortable with their name being used. Correspondence about the interviews took place in my University Microsoft Outlook

email account and the consent forms and interview transcripts do not contain personal information apart from the person's name, where appropriate – these were saved separately on my hard drive and my Dropbox account.

3. Ethical Review Process

I submitted an ethical review application to the Cross-school Research Ethics Committee (C-REC). The transcript follows:

Name of Funder AHRC

Project Description

Psytrance has been discussed in terms of its global and local expressions; my research seeks to deeper explore how its local nodes reinterpret the culture of the global scene for themselves. British psytrance has been crucial to the development of the genre and is therefore the main focus of the project. The aims of this study are:

- To understand how producers composer their music, including their creative processes, what technologies they use and what inspires them.
- To learn how DJs choose tracks and mix them for their performance sets, again looking at creative processes and working practices.
- To find out how trends in British psytrance have changed over time and how notions of 'psychedelicness' in the music have evolved.

The methodologies used in the study will consist of participant observation at three psytrance events resulting in short ethnographic pieces, non-participant observation and interviews with producers and DJs and an online survey where participants will be sought via social media and online forums.

» Risk Assessment

A10. If you have answered 'Yes' to ANY of the above questions, your application will be considered as HIGH risk. If however you wish to make a case that your application should be considered as LOW risk please enter the reasons here:

A2. I will be prefacing the chapters of my thesis with short ethnographic vignettes I have written following participant observation at psytrance events in different locations: a nightclub, a licensed festival and an illegal indoor gathering. In all cases, no individual person present will be identified (apart from, by implication, myself) and in the case of the illegal gathering, neither the location nor the name of the party organisers will be disclosed. These short pieces are intended to provide a sense of atmosphere which will elucidate the main body of the text for the reader, rather than serve as detailed and comprehensive ethnographic reports. A3. Music producers and DJs being interviewed about their creative methods may wish to be identified, however unless they specifically state this, interviews will be anonymised. In both cases an information sheet will be provided stating the nature and conditions of their participation and a permission form for them to sign before the interviews take place. A5. Drug use and illegal gatherings are discussed in my thesis, referencing government data and policy, the Global Drugs Survey and data from two harm reduction organisations, Kosmicare (in Portugal) and Kosmicare UK. Kosmicare and Kosmicare UK are each in the process of publishing articles featuring the data. I contacted the researchers directly to obtain the data, permission to use it in my project and the researcher details to

cite. The articles should be published by the time my thesis is ready to submit, at which point I will update my citations to reflect that. The interviews with psytrance producers and DJs will be semi-structured and will all be anonymised, unless the participants state they wish to be named. I do not plan to ask participants questions about their personal drug use or other illegal activities but they could offer information about this, or make general observations regarding illegal activities, due to the semi-structured nature of the interviews. In addition to the information sheet and permission form signed before the interview, the researcher will also specifically seek their permission to use this more sensitive information once the interview is finished and verbally reiterate that permission can be withdrawn in future if the participant has a change of mind.

» Data Collection and Analysis (Please provide full details)

B1. PARTICIPANTS: How many people do you envisage will participate, who are they, and how will they be selected?

I anticipate interviewing 5-8 people altogether, perhaps 3-5 of whom will be music producers and 2-3 DJs (anonymised unless they specifically state otherwise). Participants will be selected from a network of acquaintances in the psytrance scene I have built up over the years as scene insider. An online questionnaire will be set up via SurveyMonkey, with a maximum of 100 participants.

B2. RECRUITMENT: How will participants be approached and recruited?

I will approach participants in person if I am well acquainted with them and follow up with an email if they are happy to take part. I will send emails to potential participants I am less well acquainted with. Participants for the online survey will be sought via social media sites and music forums, with an invitation that will link to my academic wordpress blog. All participants recruited will be over the age of 18.

B3. METHOD: What research method(s) do you plan to use; e.g. interview, questionnaire/self-completion questionnaire, field observation, audio/audio-visual recording?

Music producers: 60 minute non-participant observation followed by 15-30 minute semi-structured interview. Non-participant observation part: I will observe the participants whilst they compose their music, recording the session (audio only) and making notes. I may at certain points ask for the participant to 'think aloud' what they are doing for clarification but it will otherwise be silent observation. I will not transcribe the recording but if some of the 'think aloud' statements seem pertinent to my research I will transcribe these. Interview part: I will record the audio for these and transcribe it. Participant observation: Attendance at three events at different locations; a nightclub, a licensed festival and an illegal indoor gathering. No covert note taking or observing from the perimeter, simply participation and recording impressions after the event. In all cases, no individual person present will be identified (apart from, by implication, myself) and additionally in the case of the illegal gathering, neither the location nor the name of the party organisers will be disclosed. These pieces are intended to provide a sense of atmosphere which will elucidate the main body of the text for the reader, rather than serve as detailed and comprehensive ethnographic reports. In response to the 2nd return of the application for review: Psytrance originated as an underground scene and continues to flourish in this context in the context. After the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act passed in 1994, parties increasingly began to take place in licensed spaces (what I refer to as a legal gathering) as a matter of necessity but the desirable context is a more spontaneous outdoor gathering or indoor 'squat party' in disused warehouses, for example (which I refer to as an illegal gathering owing to it's contravention of the CJA and POA '94,

which describes a 'rave' as a gathering of ten or more people with music consisting of a succession of repetitive beats). A key aspect of psytrance parties is the creation of a Temporary Autonomous Zone, the autonomy being from the institutions of society such as lawmakers, police and the bureaucracy of local councils and licensing laws. Whilst parties taking place in clubs or licensed festivals also create a liminal space by other means, it does not constitute a T.A.Z. in the same way as an illegal gathering. Any research into psytrance, and particularly the UK psytrance scene, must explore the underground/illegal aspects of the scene which are vital to its history and to how people currently participate in it, or if not be considered incomplete and inadequate. The researcher is embedded in the UK psytrance scene, has attended several illegal gatherings/parties already and has built up a network of contacts and close friends who accompany the researcher to gatherings. The applicant does not intend to 'compare and contrast' between legal and illegal contexts but this does not preclude the necessity of observing at least one illegal gathering for the sake of authenticity and giving an accurate and authoritative account of the current UK scene. In the experience of the researcher and scene participants who have previously informed her research, the extent of legal action in the event a party is shut down by police is that party organizers may have their sound system impounded, and/or may be charged for trespassing, whilst party goers are merely dispersed, unless they are arrested for the possession of illegal substances - the researcher will obviously not be in possession of any illegal substance. Although the ethnographic vignettes proposed will speak to the creativity and 'psychedelicness' explored by the other research methods in this study, they also help to address the wider research questions of the PhD thesis about how the culture of the global psytrance scene is distilled and expressed differently by the local British scene, and how 'Britishness' is located in this scene.

B4. LOCATION: Where will the project be carried out e.g. public place, in researcher's office, in private office at organisation?

Music producers and DJs: their studio (or by skype if at too far a distance, though my preference would be for a one to one interview). A questionnaire version of the interview questions may be sent to the participant if the observation is by Skype but they do not wish to be interviewed by Skype. Participant observation: Attendance at three events at different locations; a nightclub, a licensed festival and an illegal indoor gathering. Online survey: Surveymonkey site.

» Confidentiality and Anonymity

B5. Will questionnaires be completed anonymously and returned indirectly? No

B6. Will data only be identifiable by a unique identifier (e.g. code/pseudonym)? Yes

B7. Will lists of identity numbers or pseudonyms linked to names and/or addresses be stored securely and separately from the research data? Yes

B8. Will all place names and institutions which could lead to the identification of individuals or organisations be changed? No

B9. Will all personal information gathered be treated in strict confidence and never disclosed to any third parties? Yes

B10. Can you confirm that your research records will be held in accordance with the data protection guidelines? (<http://www.sussex.ac.uk/ogs/policies/information/dpa>) Yes

B11. Can you confirm that you will not use the research data for any purpose other than that which consent is given? Yes

B11a. If you answered NO to any of the above (or think more information could be useful to the reviewer) please explain here:

B5. If a questionnaire is returned by music producers or DJs, it will be treated in the same way as the recorded interview transcriptions. If music producers or DJs being interviewed wish to be identified, I will include their names/artist names (otherwise the interviews will be anonymised). The online survey is completely anonymous. B8. I intend to include the names of legal/licensed festivals and nightclubs (but not illegal or private parties).

» Informed Consent and Recruitment of Participants

B12. Will all respondents be given an Information Sheet and be given adequate time to read it before being asked to agree to participate? Yes

B13. Will all participants taking part in an interview, focus group, observation (or other activity which is not questionnaire based) be asked to sign a consent form? If you are obtaining consent another way, please explain under 15a below. No

B14. Will all participants self-completing a questionnaire be informed that returning the completed questionnaire implies consent to participate? N/A

B15. Will all respondents be told that they can withdraw at any time, ask for their data to be destroyed and/or removed from the project until it is no longer practical to do so? Yes

B15a. If you answered NO to any of the above (or think more information could be useful to the reviewer) please explain here:

B13. Consent forms will be completed by all music producers and DJs being interviewed. Online survey participants will be given access to an Information Sheet via my Wordpress blog, which has the invite, explanation of the project and link to the survey. The final question on the survey asks for their consent and covers the information that is on the consent forms for my producer/DJ interviews. If they do not select the three boxes indicating they agree to the terms, the survey will not be complete and the data will not therefore be collected.

» Context

B16. Is DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) clearance necessary for this project? If yes, please ensure you complete the next question. No

B17. Are any other ethical clearances or permissions (internal or external) required? Please see the help text (i) for further details No

B17a. If yes, please give further details including the name and address of the organisation. If other ethical approval has already been received please attach evidence of approval, otherwise you will need to supply it when ready. (You do not need to provide evidence of a current DBS check at this point)

B18. Does the research involve any fieldwork - Overseas or in the UK? Yes

B18a. If yes, where will the fieldwork take place?

Participant observation: Attendance at three events at different locations; a nightclub, a licensed festival and an illegal indoor gathering (no lone working involved, researcher accompanied).

Certificate of Approval

The application received two rounds of feedback from the Committee and was updated accordingly and finally approved.



Certificate of Approval	
Reference Number:	ER/GLF21/1
Title Of Project:	Psytrance, Creativity and 'Psychedeliness'
Principal Investigator (PI):	Gemma Farrell
Student:	Gemma Farrell
Collaborators:	
Duration Of Approval:	n/a
Expected Start Date:	15-Apr-2015
Date Of Approval:	15-Apr-2015
Approval Expiry Date:	30-Sep-2016
Approved By:	Jayne Paulin
Name of Authorised Signatory:	Janet Boddy
Date:	15-Apr-2015
<p>*NB. If the actual project start date is delayed beyond 12 months of the expected start date, this Certificate of Approval will lapse and the project will need to be reviewed again to take account of changed circumstances such as legislation, sponsor requirements and University procedures.</p> <p>Please note and follow the requirements for approved submissions:</p> <p>Amendments to protocol</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Any changes or amendments to approved protocols must be submitted to the C-REC for authorisation prior to implementation. <p>Feedback regarding the status and conduct of approved projects</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Any incidents with ethical implications that occur during the implementation of the project must be reported immediately to the Chair of the C-REC. <p>Feedback regarding any adverse and unexpected events</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Any adverse (undesirable and unintended) and unexpected events that occur during the implementation of the project must be reported to the Chair of the Social Sciences C-REC. In the event of a serious adverse event, research must be stopped immediately and the Chair alerted within 24 hours of the occurrence. 	

Retrospective Ethics Assessment

By the time the approval date on my Certificate of Approval had expired, I had carried out two interviews and went ahead with another five after that date as well as adding a fourth

party to my participant observations. I went back to the Chair of the committee after this to request a Retrospective Ethics Assessment to cover this later research:



10th July 2019

Dear Gemma

Re: Retrospective Ethics Assessment of your PhD thesis:

Psytrance, Creativity and 'Psychedelicness'

As Chair of SSARTS C-REC, I have been asked to offer a retrospective ethical assessment of the above project. At Sussex University, this is a process undertaken by me, supported by our university Research Governance Officer, that assesses the ethical dimensions of research that has already been undertaken. We are not able to give a retrospective ethical approval but are willing, in specific circumstances to undertake a retrospective ethical assessment to support our students' studies.

You received ethical approval for your research on April 15th, 2015 and this covered your research activities until September 30th, 2016. This retrospective ethical assessment therefore only relates to additional research activities (3 interviews and one observation at a private outdoor party) that took place in 2017, after your ethics approval had expired. You have explained to me that you hadn't realised your ethical approval had expired and also that given you had already interviewed people with related roles within this context and conducted observations, that the interviews and extra event you observed during 2017, did not raise any new ethical issues, in your mind.

Your research explored: how producers compose their music, including their creative processes, what technologies they use and what inspires them; how DJs choose tracks and mix them for their performance sets, again looking at creative processes and working practices; and how trends in British psytrance have changed over time and how notions of 'psychedelicness' in the music have evolved. In the original research plans you were going to use participant observation at three psytrance events which would be written up as short ethnographic pieces. In 2017 (when you were not covered by ethical approval), you conducted a further non-participant observation of a private outdoor party which resulted in a fourth ethnographic vignette. You did this to give a full spectrum of contexts: squat parties on trespassed land or buildings; licensed indoor club events; outdoor events on private land; and a licensed festival. You have said you followed the same research procedures in this last observation.

In total you conducted 7 interviews which was within the projected number of interviews in the original application. However in the field, some of the producers and DJs approached were not comfortable with the non-participant observation of their working practises and didn't want to participate and so you also interviewed a long time scene participant and writer, a dancer and flow artist, an artist liaison and stage manager, and a visual artist who creates décor for psytrance events. These people were relevant as you were interested in knowing whether aspects of musical style were expressed in different artistic vectors. Three

interviews (with the long time scene participant and writer, the artist liaison and stage manager, and the visual artist) took place in 2017 after the approval had expired.

Given the additional participants you interviewed were connected artistically to the British psytrance scene and therefore similar to those you had originally planned for, I do not think that these interviews raise additional ethical issues. Likewise, your observation of the private party in 2017, does not in my mind pose new ethical problems. In light of the points made above, my retrospective assessment of your research is that it seems to have been conducted ethically despite the fact that the usual institutional ethical review approval through the C-REC did not cover the latter part of your data collection in 2017.

Thanks very much

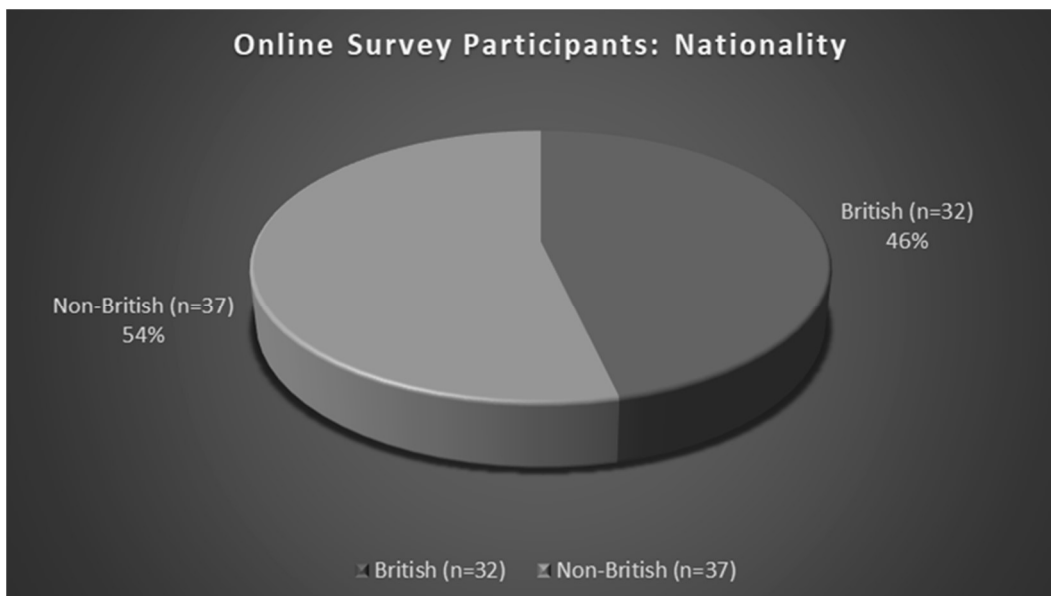
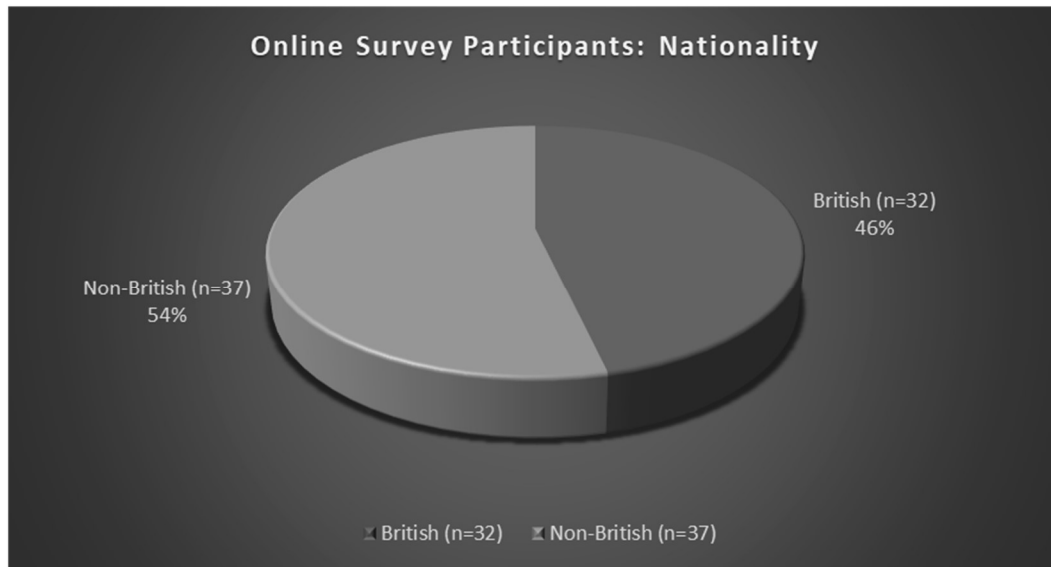
Dr Liz McDonnell

Chair of SS-ARTS CREC

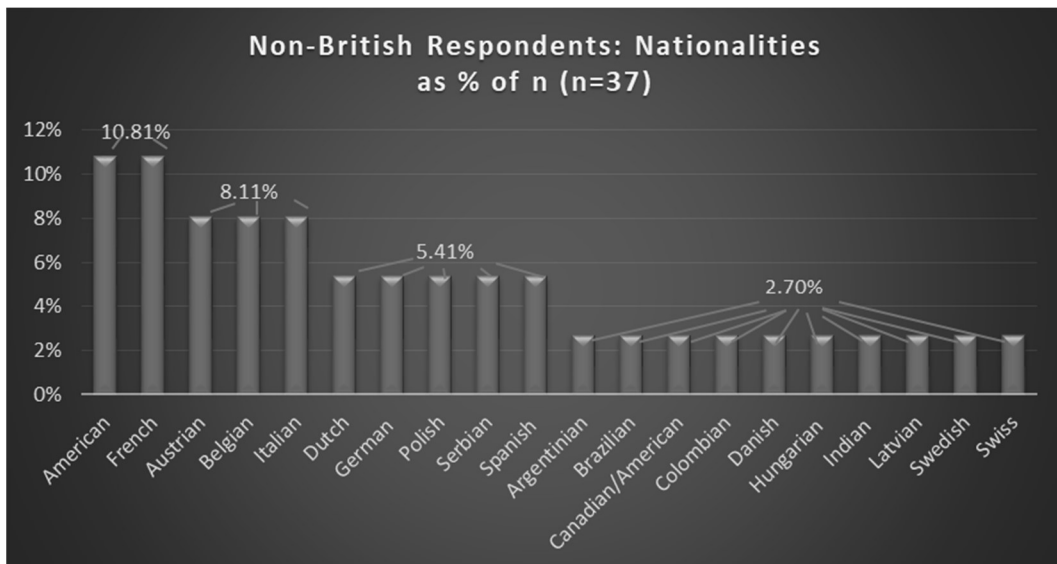
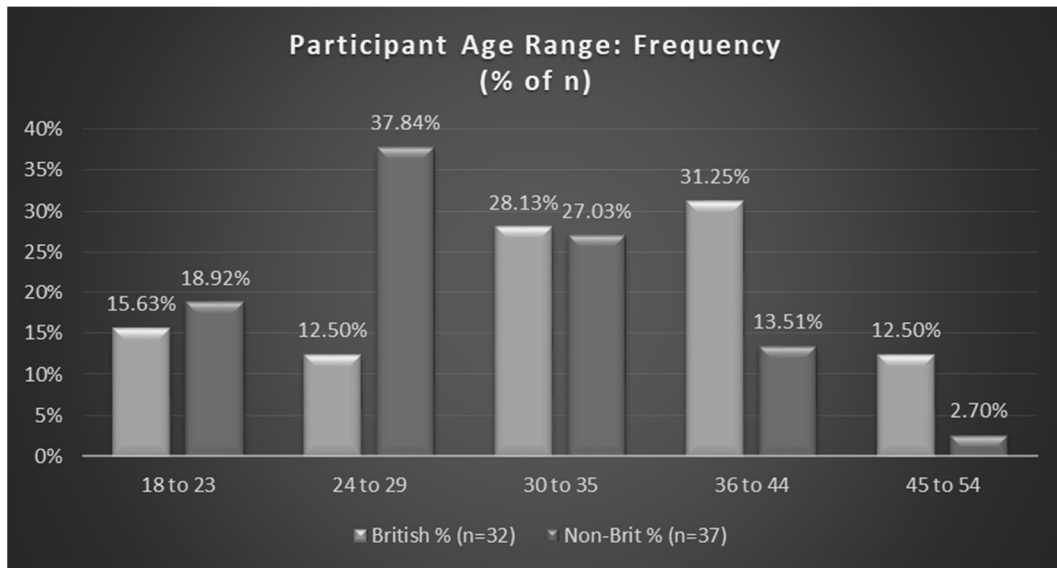
APPENDIX D

Questionnaire and Interview Data

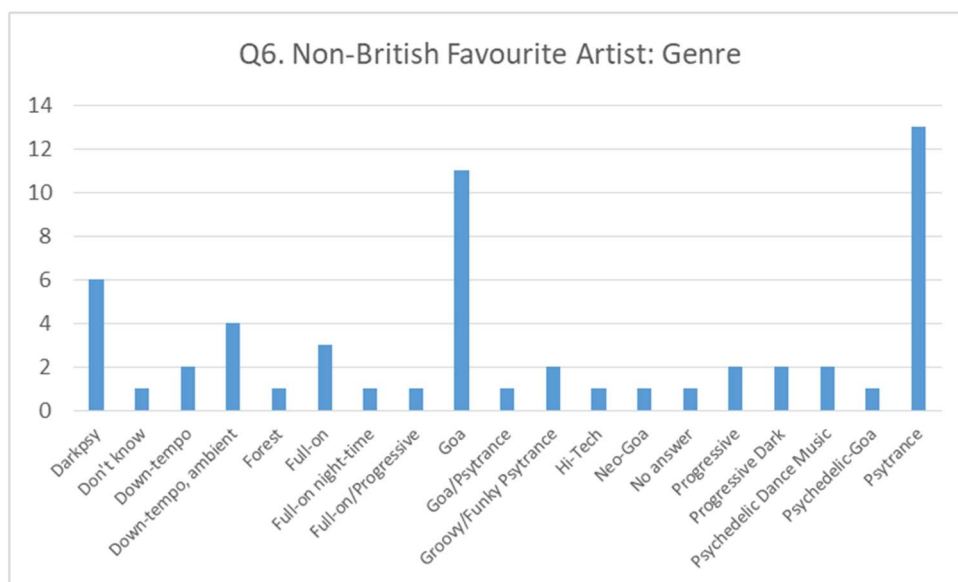
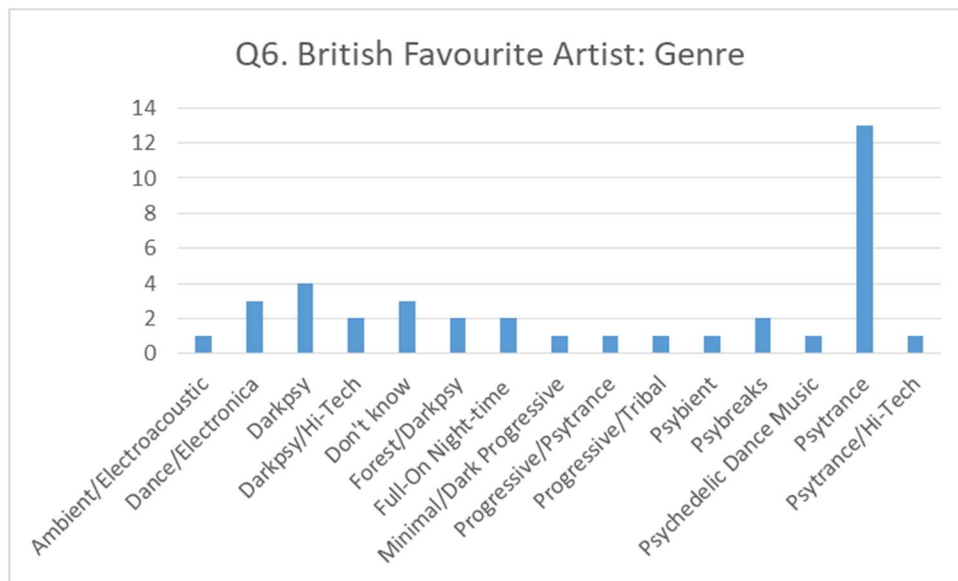
1. Online Questionnaire Classification Graphs

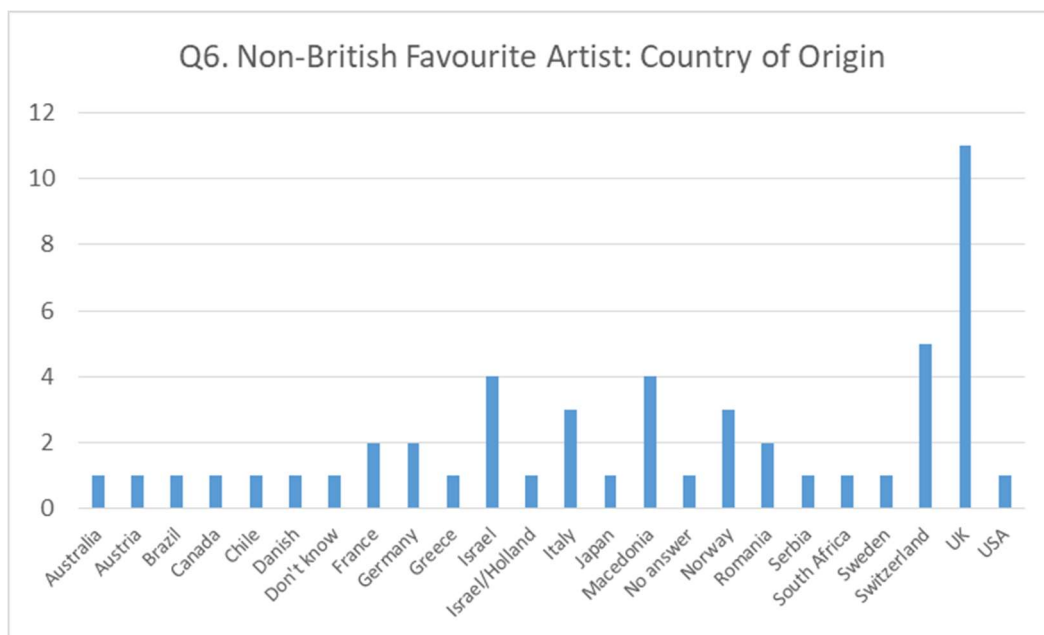
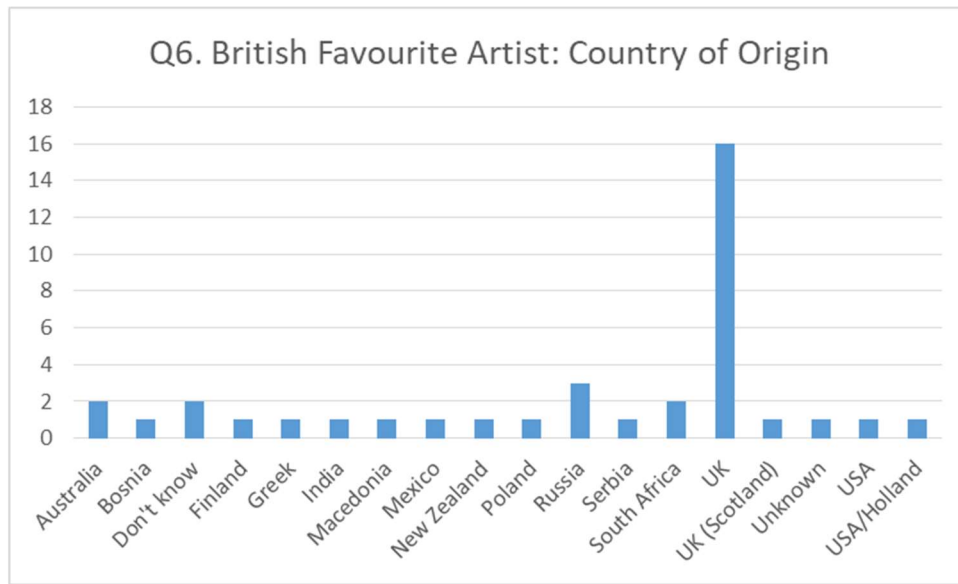


There were 69 respondents to the online survey, of which 32 were British and 37 were of other nationalities. The group were predominantly male, with two female participants, one in the British group and one of another nationality.

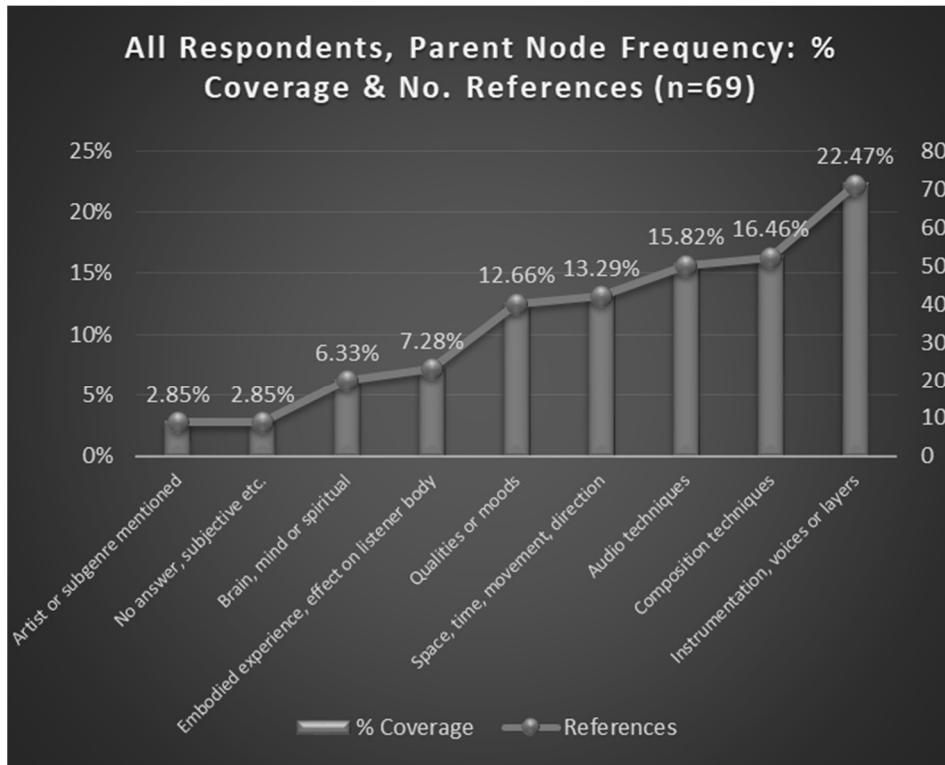


2. Online Questionnaire Results Question 6

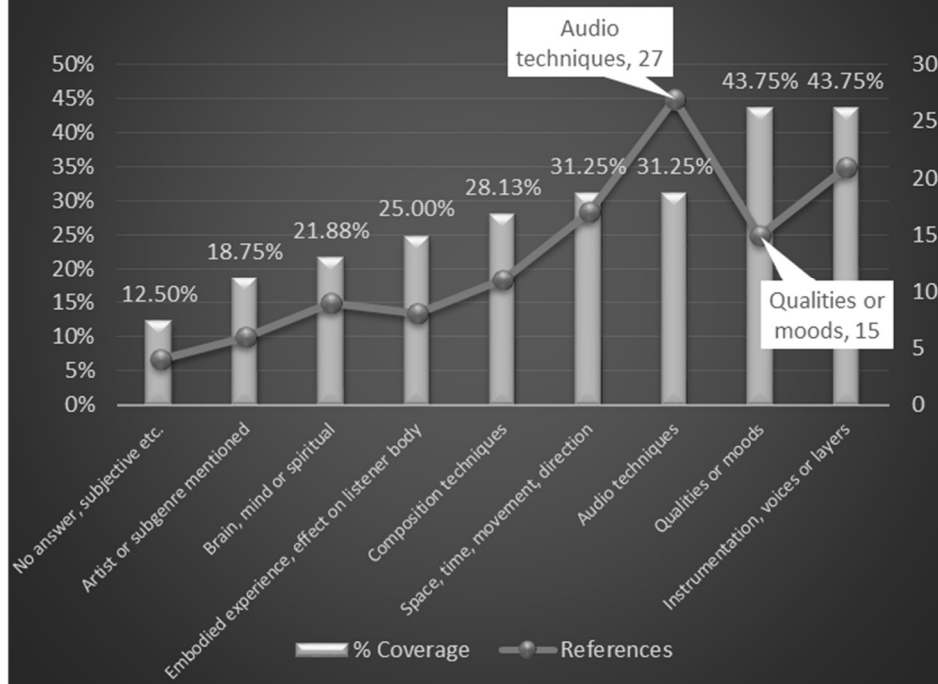




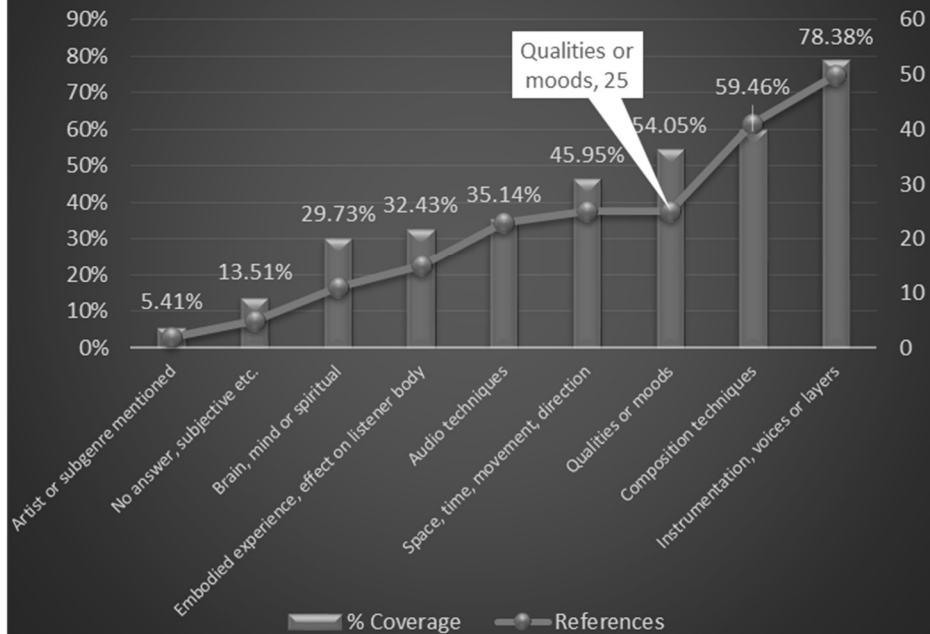
3. Online Questionnaire Results: Question 7

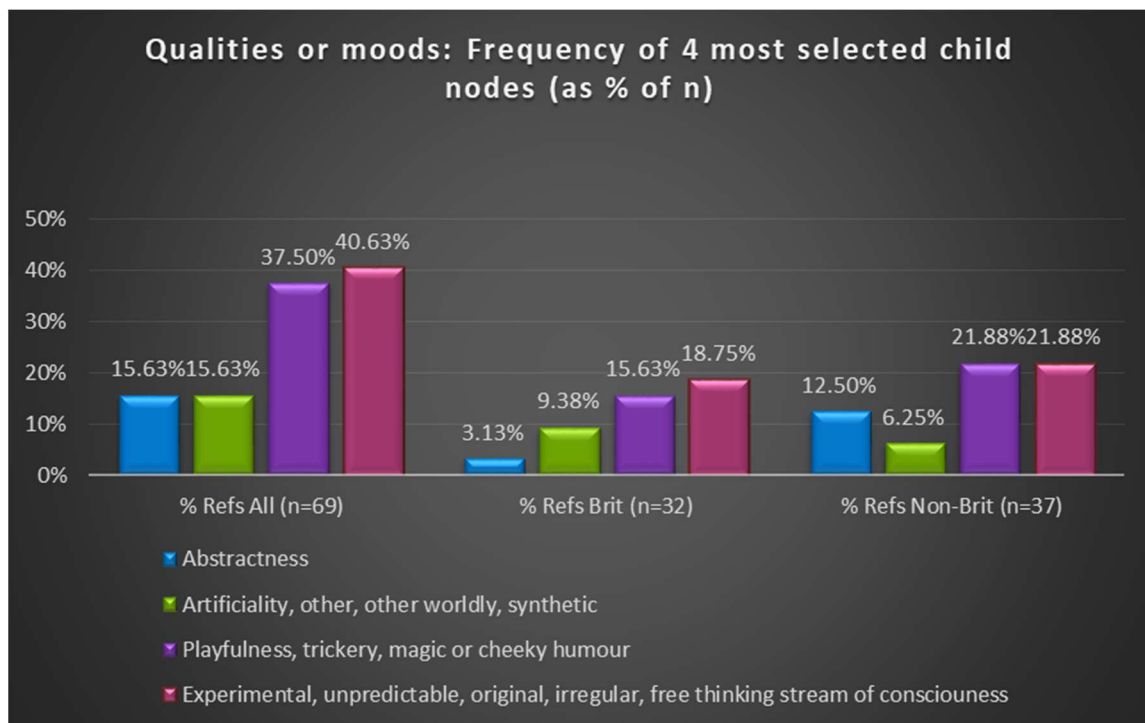
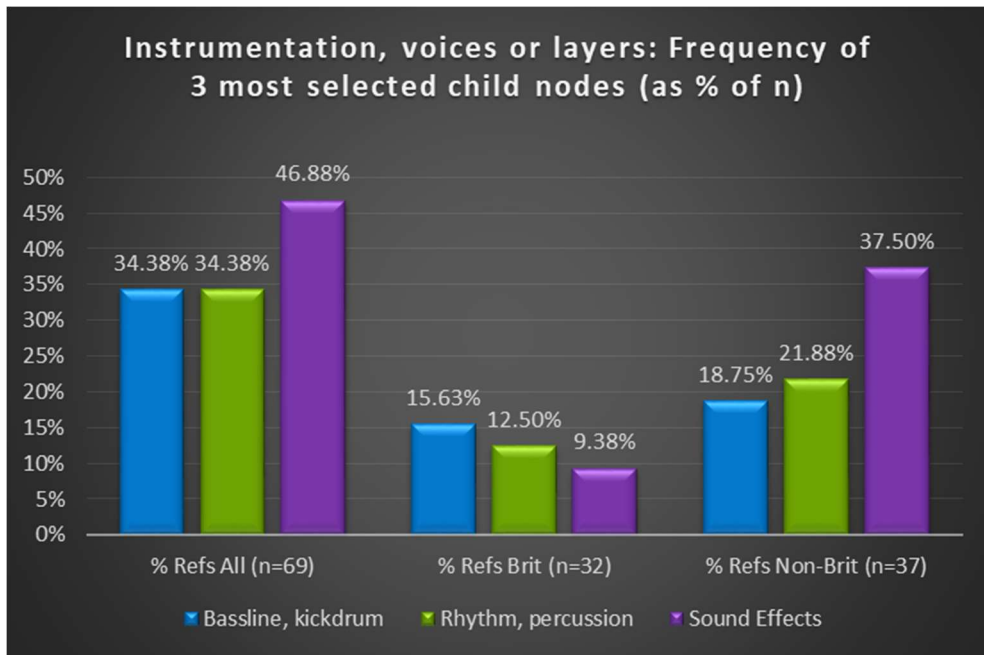


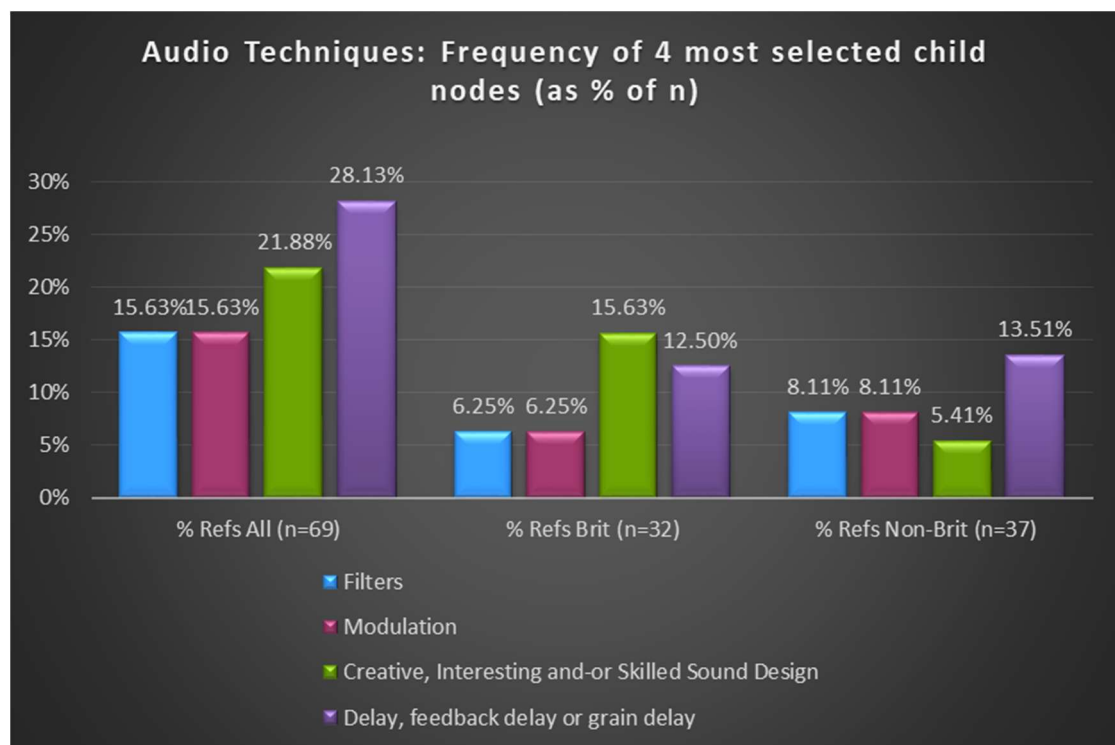
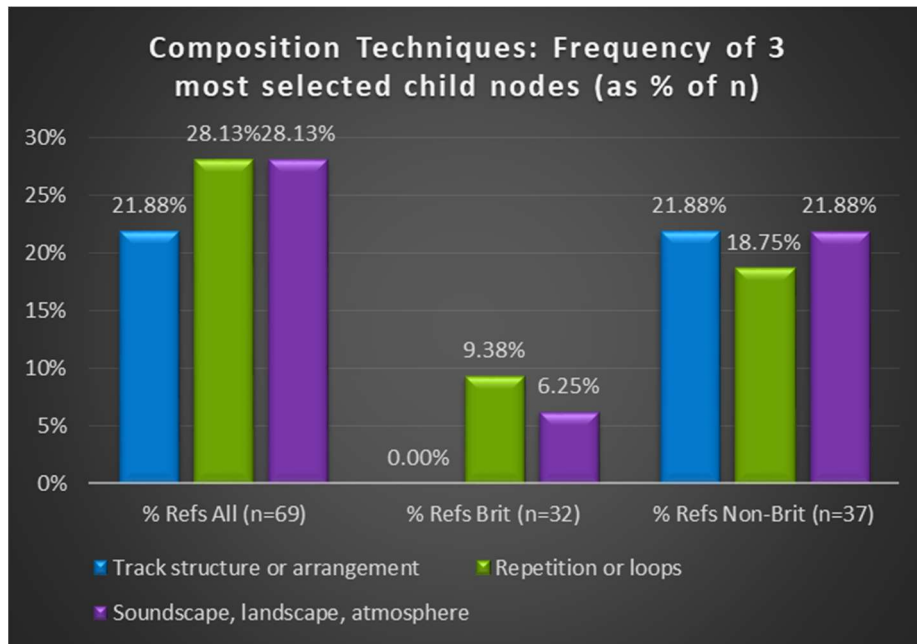
British Respondents, Parent Node Frequency: % Coverage & No. References (n=32)



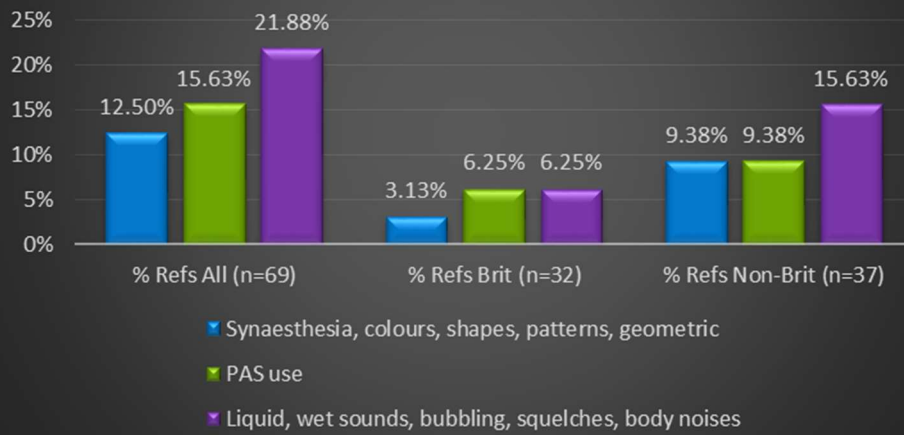
Non-British Respondents, Parent Node Frequency: % Coverage & No. References (n=39)



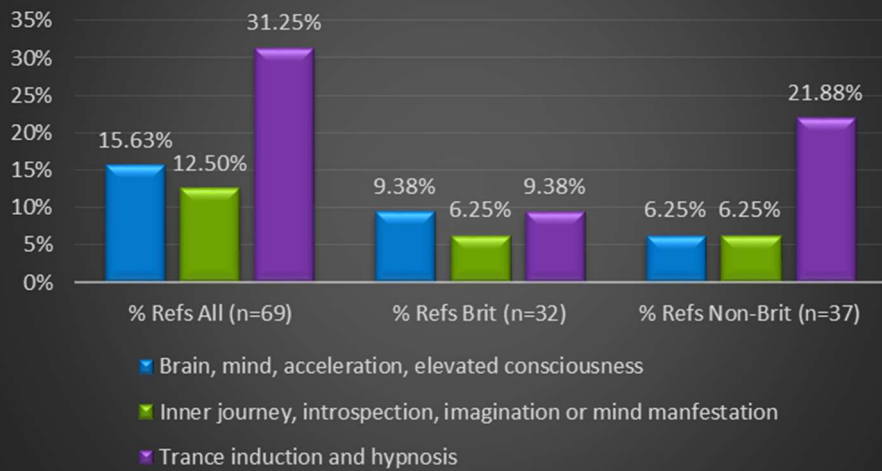




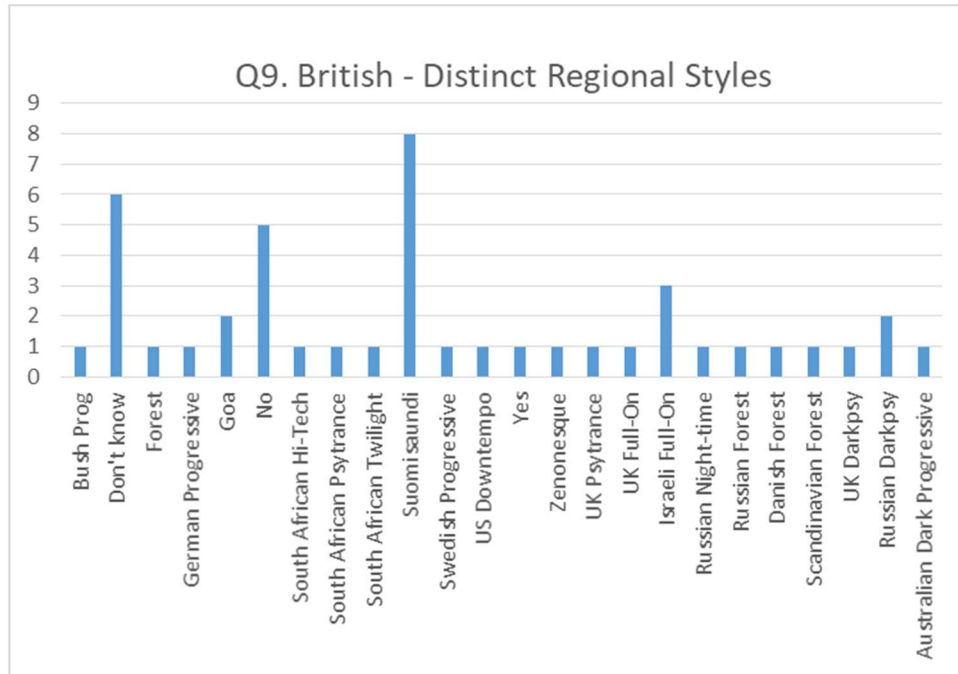
**Embodied experience, effect on listener body:
Frequency of 3 most selected child nodes (as
% of n)**

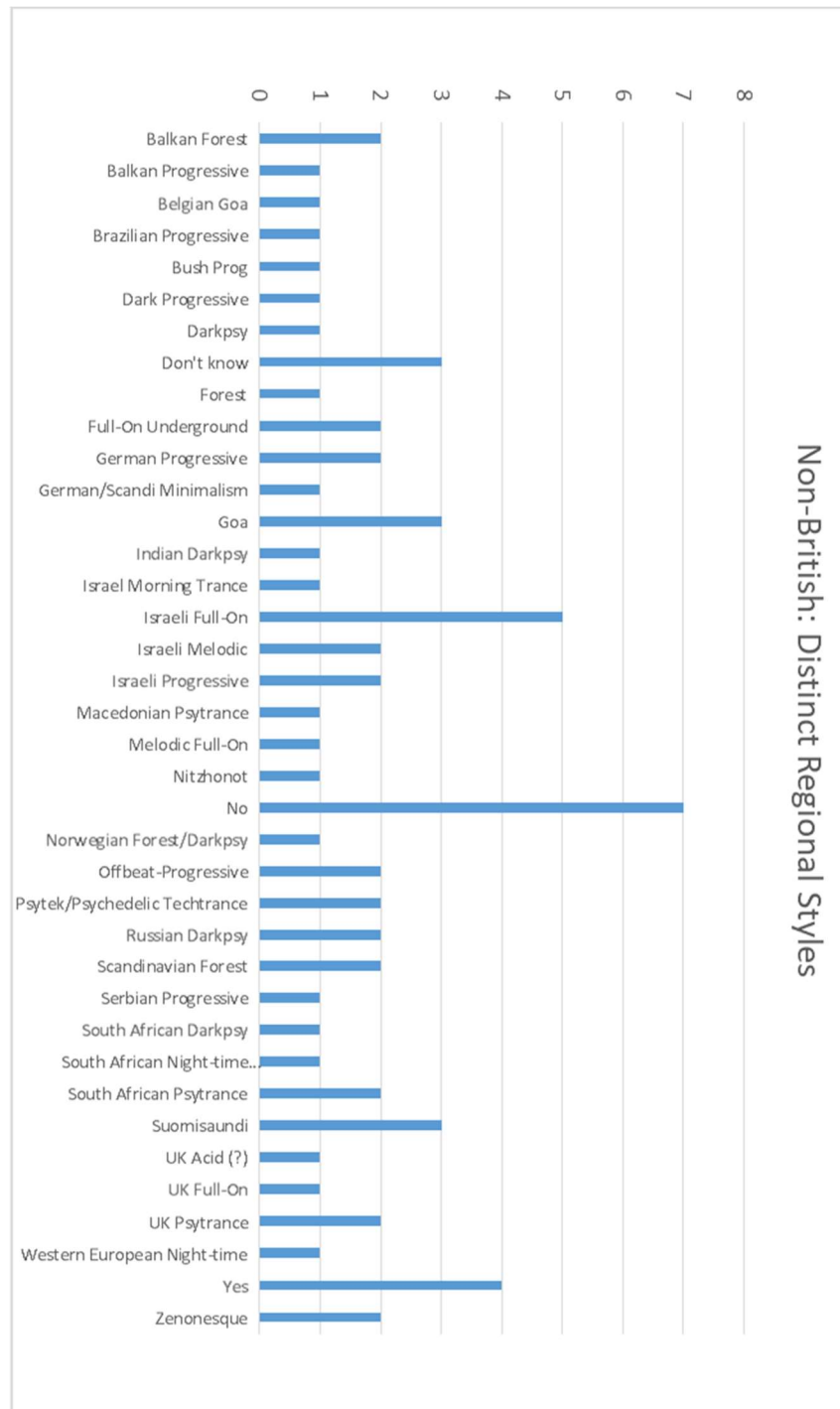


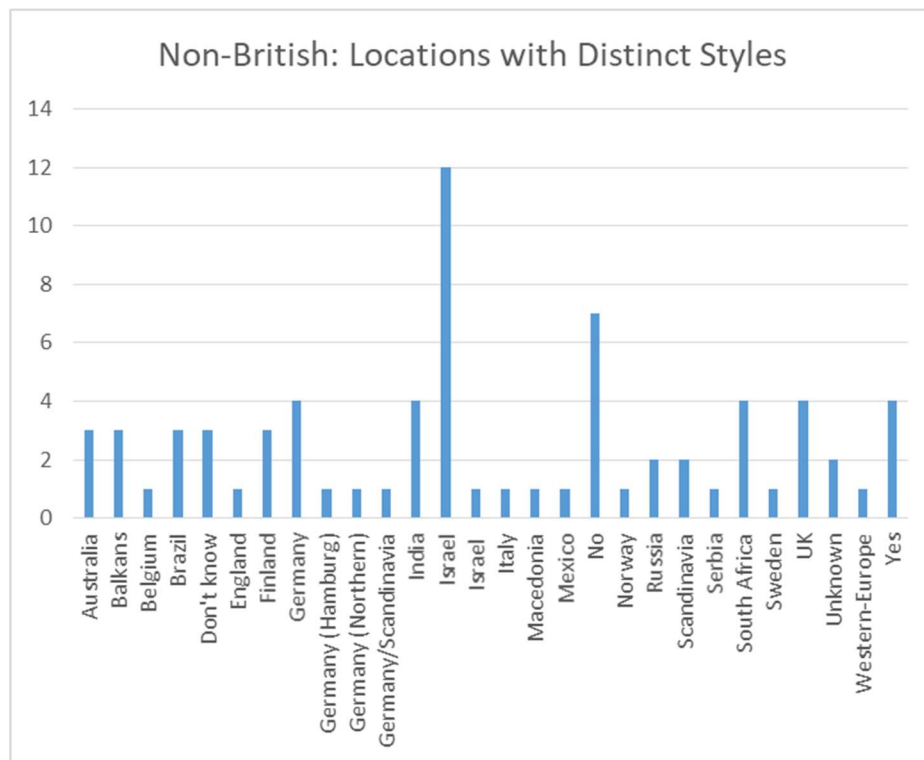
**Brain, mind or spiritual: Frequency of 3 most
selected child nodes (as % of n)**



4. Online Questionnaire Results Question 9







APPENDIX E

One-to-One Interview Transcripts

1. Lainey Round, 29.06.15 - Flautist, Producer and Teacher

How would you describe the music you write? (E.g. in terms of genre, mood etc.)

It's progressive psytrance, so different from standard psytrance in the sense that - well mostly due to the tempo. That would be between... well my slowest track is 134bpm and then my latest project is with another London producer who... he was mostly doing full-on psytrance, sort of a fusion and my set starts at 134bpm and then it goes up gradually up to... I think we're at 138bpm at the moment, that's kind of the fastest that I've done.

Oh right, so as you go through the set it sort of gets faster through the set, you mean?

Yeah, that's how my set is. So yeah that's one of the things that characterizes it as progressive psytrance - also progressive psytrance is called progressive psytrance because it progresses more slowly than full-on psytrance.

What is your most typical creative process when you write music? (E.g. structure/planning versus inspirational or exploratory methods.) What does a typical session look like?

Well it's a bit of both really, because generally I do have a set way that I start which is... I mean everybody does, such as start with the kick and the bass, because we need that framework. The way I work is, principally my main strength lies in making melodies, so what I then do is start writing melodic parts, sort of overlaying lots of melodies over other melodies so that they all sort of link together - sort of counter melodies that go with - you know, just building it up vertically. So I'll maybe come up with a phrase, like a loop, I'll just come up with a melody or something and then that would be like a 'trigger', building up from that vertically, basically. And then after that, soon after the breakdown, it's the main section where everything is going on and the whole track is building up to. I kind of do that first and then after that make the rest of the track, stripping those ideas back and then sort of like thinning it out and maybe chopping up some of those melodies into smaller fragments, that gradually sort of build up to that. And sort of harmonically overlaying these melodies, I'm also making a chord sequence - so I work harmonically. A lot of psytrance producers just don't change chords but because of my classical training that's how I work. I come up with the chord sequence but then when I start off the track I would never introduce the chord sequence straightaway, because then it doesn't have any impact. I start off just on the root note basically and then again gradually bring in/introduce the harmonies, so gradually sort of a few minutes into the track I sort of bring in one of the chords - so it's sort of teasing almost, stripping the ideas back and then introducing them gradually.

To what extent do you use pre-set sounds in your tracks and to what extent sounds you have engineered yourself?

It's varied actually, I mean I started off by learning how to do them, like make my own sounds and then my first track that I made is called 'Free' the second track is called 'Flow' and I released them both - on my first EP. It's like you know, I am quite different to other producers where they'll do things for years and then not release anything and not finish

tracks for ages, but I sort of just from the start was like "Right" you know, even my first track that I have made it's like I finished it, I released it. But that first track 'Free' was all with pre-sets and then I started to realise "Oh okay, I'm running out of pre-sets" and then I actually posted on the Psyforum "Okay, I need to learn synthesis - help!" you know, and they say "Okay, yeah" and they gave some tips, that you can use this synth just to learn it and here are a few tutorials and stuff. So I did watch a few tutorials on synthesis, then my second track 'Flow' was basically like I pretty much made all the sounds in it, so that was good.

What is your ideal scenario for being creative? (E.g. in terms of state of mind, whether alone or working with other people, psychedelic altered states, location et cetera.)

Well I've only ever - well mostly - made music at my own place because ...that's just a practical thing. I started off only making music by myself but that was just because that's what I had to do in order to learn it, but I've really enjoyed recently as I mentioned, currently I'm working with Dreaddean and... it's been really, really cool working with him basically, partly because I was getting really lonely. Like really, I was slogging for two years by myself, felt quite isolated it was bloody hard work and I was really actually working myself into the ground with it and pretty lonely, although that was necessary, but it's been great.

He just messaged me and said "Yeah, do you want to collaborate?" and I wasn't really expecting much from it, but it just turned out that we ended up actually really working well together, partly because the thing that I've really struggled with and really actually don't enjoy, is the making the bass and the percussion - and actually getting that up to standard as well, I find it the hardest. I find it's also the thing that actually labels are really looking for the most as well, also like one of the most important things - and also something that I really don't enjoy, so basically Lain loves doing that! At the same time, like many producers, he hasn't got the musical training that I have, so he wanted his music to be more melodic and he doesn't have the musical understanding that I do about harmonies and stuff, so it's kind of like I get to do what I like, I get to take care of that and he really loves the fact that I'm doing that because he's not as good at that. Then you know, he'll do the kick, bass and the percussion and he'll get kicks out of making his own bass and kick and stuff, yes it's like we're complementing each other really and it's really taken a weight off my shoulders just being able to... We both put in all the trippy sounds together, we both have put in all of those little sounds and then sort of weave the sounds in and out of each other, but yes, I'm basically doing the melodies and harmonies. We've both got kind of our own tasks, it just really, really works well. Also, because his music used to be a bit more full-on, so in a way my music I think needed to be a bit more dance-y, his music needed to be a bit more melodic, so yeah, we've got the best of both worlds I think it's just made it so much easier as well, just so much less work.

What elements of the music you write make it psychedelic? Tell me more about the little psychedelic sounds you were talking about a bit earlier.

Little sounds - it's basically the sounds, like it's the way in which the sounds are made. So there are normally, often a lot of saw wave sounds with a lot of effects basically, you know that's what makes them psychedelic is just they're very processed, the sounds and it's just particularly - they're just characteristic sounds aren't they in psytrance? The sort of squelchy, sort of liquid-y, very quirky sounds. Lain is great as well because he uses hardware - he's got a Nord Lead so he makes his own sounds on that which are very psychedelic.

To what extent do you have your audience and/or potential location/venue in mind when working on a track you are writing?

No, that's the thing, I mean really my music is more - no I'm not really thinking about that actually, I'm more thinking about - it is just happening. I don't really think about what I am going to do with the tune it just happens and for me it's more of a personal thing. Several of

my tracks tell the story of me trying to recover from my illness, for example. It's very, very personal and emotional, you know? I've got my next EP, it's called *Road to Recovery*, the third track I wrote is called 'Road to Recovery', so it's a personal story and it, I suppose it's kind of like just expressing myself, pretty much.

Has your writing style changed over time? How?

I don't know actually - obviously changed it recently but that's just because I'm collaborating with someone, but actually, no. Even in the sense of what I'm actually doing it's very - I don't think it has changed that much basically, you know it's just like very melodic and harmonic and very expressive.

One of the things I wanted to ask you about was, obviously you're working with a guy now, and like you said before it's a bit of a man's world so to what extent do you think your femininity comes through music, having heard other people's music, by guys or what have you? Or is there not a difference?

It definitely does, because it is like a true fusion of me and him. Yeah and it definitely comes through because I'm having at least 50% influence in the track and because I'm the one who is actually making the melodies and the harmonies - actually in some ways yeah, I don't know.

So would it be right to say that you equate the melody and harmony side of things with 'the feminine'?

It's interesting you say it because I hadn't thought of that, but yeah... actually I suppose, yeah quite possibly, yeah. But then sometimes I'll start a track and then we take turns starting tracks but the ones that he started have been like a bit more upbeat, a bit more sort of full-on, a bit more like his style and then the ones I've started have been a bit more like my style - but that's cool because we're both getting a balance and we're both putting in our personalities, so it's a nice solution. So it's sort of a nice balance of male and female I guess.

Does culture outside the psytrance scene influence your music? How? What about everyday life, or news about what's happening in the UK?

Well you have classical, yeah so that's the main thing really, the whole training of playing the flute you know, I've got melodies coming out of my ears! So I've been playing the melodies on the flute since I was eight and then after that the classical music degree, where obviously the classical music degree is influencing it in terms of the harmonic structure and also melodically as well. The style in which I play and compose is very influenced by my classical training. Only after my music degree did I sort of realise I could improvise, because you know with the classical thing we never did improvisation and didn't think I could, but then - actually it was a house party after uni we were playing psytrance and I got intoxicated on a certain substance and then I had decided to start playing my flute to the psytrance and you know, just had a moment where I was realised that I could improvise because I wasn't consciously thinking about it, I was doing it. So that's kind of how that started and now I just improvise my melodies.

You talked earlier about how your music is very personal to you and I just wondered to what extent wider culture influences you - things that you see are happening on the news for example or day to day interactions with people?

To be honest, no. It's very, very much coming from me, it's very much up until now, yeah, it's kind of a personal thing I think. Although actually I mean on a wider level it has a very spiritual sort of meaning for me, so in the wider sense I'm basically trying to make people feel a certain way, kind of trying to make people feel maybe... feel in a higher state of

consciousness sort of thing - 'heart energy'? So I guess maybe I'm trying to actually share, extend that sort of heart energy really.

So is it a bit more like an antidote then maybe, to things that are going on out in the big bad world?

I do think yes, I think it's very much love based.

Has the vibe at the events you play changed over the years? How?

Yeah, well... maybe not - not necessarily like - because I've only been playing for a year and a half - no, no I've only been playing for like a year actually, but I've been going to parties for 10 years and in terms of like events that I've attended, yeah, it's really changed.

How so?

It's all the dark music that is coming in which I'm really not a fan of and I don't know, yeah the vibe is kind of like a bit more... it's almost like people are doing too many drugs. It's a bit more like... sketchy at some of the events and just disorganised and just not as much respect for the artists. And you know, the parties, they're not as big as they used to be and there's not always as much effort going into them and yeah, the vibe and the music has just changed. There's still some good stuff going on, but I dare say it's gone downhill I think a bit, but then yeah, there is still good stuff going on as well.

Why do you think that is? Do you have any inkling as to how things might have got more disorganised or more lacking in respect and things like that that?

I don't know... maybe like, too many drugs? I think yeah, actually in a lot of cases. People doing it for the wrong reasons, for money and not actually paying artists. Yeah, I'm sure that happened before but I don't know. Yeah, I don't know whether it's just my perception, because I'm sure it used to go on as well.

Do styles of psytrance correspond with particular geographic regions? If 'yes', can you give an example that stands out to you?

Well obviously every country has a different sound, a different sort of balance of maybe, different subcategories of the psytrance. So say for example London - not a lot of progressive and I just feel like actually a lot of people, kind of some people don't really maybe *get* my music in a way, because of the whole sort of 'London sound' and they tend to choose the same DJs. It's this kind of core contingent of people that gets played because there seems to be a particular 'a sound' that people prefer - or that has somehow been decided that "that is the 'London sound'".

Is that the darker sound that you are talking about?

It's not just dark it's like - and obviously we have different parties don't we, so that proves that some of them do that... Yeah, I don't know, it sort of varies in London but I think the more popular people are quite... full-on and quite driving. I think that is the most popular style in London.

145 BPM generally?

Yeah exactly.

Where do you think your music is appreciated most, out of interest?

Well I actually know from my fan page because it actually tells me statistics so I think... in fact... I know that the top three are India, Mexico and Brazil.

Are there different styles in different areas of the UK? If so, how do they differ? Like for example, there's a big scene in Bristol and the West there, and up North kind of thing?

Yeah... I couldn't really comment because I've not been to any of those parties, but I get the impression - yeah, they have their own sound I think.

Do you have any idea what that might be?

No I don't, because as I say I don't go to those events so... maybe less dark stuff I think? I mean I'd say generally with the progressive there are particular countries that have more progressive, I'm no massive expert, but just off the top of my head I know Germany has it quite a lot, but apparently Germany has now got quite a lot the dark as well. Then Switzerland has got a lot of progressive, there's a lot of good stuff coming from there - Mexico I think as well, so maybe that's quite popular music there.

2. Sam Langan, 09.09.15 – Producer and DJ

How would you describe the music you write? (E.g. in terms of genre, mood etc.)

Forest...ish.

What's the ish?

Um...not really exclusive? The sort of music I'm currently writing is like, slowed down Forest.

Is that what they call 'Twilight' or something?

No. I guess if you want to go into genre names it'd be like Psybient - or Psychill meets Forest psy.

So Psybient but with a darker, Forest feel?

Yeah, it's slow, driving and dark.

Is it that you are writing tracks in different styles or is this where your music is going now overall?

It's recently changed from the style in which I was writing - not really like an active decision "I'll make this now" just more of an evolution. Over time you sort of find your niche and find your ground within your project.

Do you think there's any reason why your style changed recently?

Yeah. The actual act of playing live, because I was doing stuff which was a bit more chilled out before. The actual act of playing live is a lot more fun to do when you've got something that still got a bit of bounce but also conversely, sort of slowing it down from psytrance I've found 'A': it's really, really nice to dance to things at that speed and it's a bit of a niche; there's not anyone doing it.

It's the slowed down psytrance you're talking about now, yeah?

Yeah. Also it leaves a little bit more space to play with within the sound, between each beat where there is a lot more air to be filled I guess.

So you are like, filling that with a soundscape type thing and noises?

Yes: atmospheres.

How long have you been writing psytrance and how did you get into it?

7-8 years. I was into metal scene and like a lot of other people, got into the psytrance scene as the music had similar characteristics (dark, fast, industrial noise etc.) and it was another alternative scene. Like the counterculture that's with it is similar to the sort of counterculture of the metal scene.

How did you learn to DJ/write music with the software and hardware that you use? (E.g. self-taught, helped by a friend, online videos/tutorials, online forums, a course of some kind etc.)

A friend taught me fundamentals of psytrance - how to write a bassline etc. and I was already familiar with Cubase as I wrote metal tracks with it. Other than that it's been a case of experimenting a lot with writing. Some tips have come from people on online forums but the general attitude is that they had to put in the time and effort experimenting and learning themselves and so should you.

What is your most typical creative process when you write music? (E.g. structure/planning versus inspirational or exploratory methods.)

I don't have a fixed process. I might just be walking around during the day and a little snippet comes into my head and I think "I'll try that at home later". Or, I might hear some other psytrance artist and like a technique or a sound they use and think "That'd be good to try", or it might even be something from a completely different genre.

Other times I might start writing a groove, a bassline and it goes from there, just experimenting and adding some leads. I'm really bad at playing keyboard so what I generally tend to do is like have a little jam - it will never be entirely- so then afterwards go around and clean up and put the notes in the right places and then to the right notes.

So you're playing what you can, at a lower speed or something and then..?

Not even a lower speed just to the best of my ability, whether it comes up completely out of time or not even any time whatsoever, it's normally the notes and so I'll craft them around, move them around with a mouse. If I'm stuck on a bit I'll move on to another part of the track, like another 32 bar bit and come back to where I got stuck later on. Working on something else or another part of the track can change how you see the part you got stuck on when you come back to it.

Like, it puts it in a different context or reframes it or something like that?

Yeah, if you move onto another part you get ideas for this new part which may not necessarily work for the new part but might work fantastically at the bit you were stuck on. Or it will be like you've done something really good in the new part so that can be like a returning motif, so that can go back in the bit in which you were stuck on as well and just like, cut it up and make musical snippets of it to like, tease it in.

To what extent do you use pre-set sounds in your tracks and to what extent sounds you have engineered yourself?

I mostly create my own sounds. I might use pre-sets that are close to the sounds I'm thinking of to get the track down quickly and get the feel of it, then I go back to it later and swap them for my own sounds.

Sort of using the pre-sets to quickly sketch out ideas?

Yes.

What is your ideal scenario for being creative? (E.g. in terms of state of mind, whether alone or working with other people, psychedelic altered states, location et cetera.)

Alone, late in the evening or at night is when I work best. I'm usually stoned - maybe the odd time Valium's been conducive for it as well.

So weed and Valium are quite chilled out and stuff, so it seems quite interesting that you've gone towards making more down tempo stuff and chilled stuff.

I seem to have gone from like, really heavy to really chilled out and then gone back up again, like picking up the pace again, because I think what I find with psytrance with it constantly always being between 137 and 147 BPM it just gets boring after a while and I do really like chilled, so it's probably something to do with that. Whether what came first, the chill or the Valium, I don't know but I've always found writing when stoned or on like, just downers, I find it a lot easier to get into the zone because it doesn't matter about the external goings-on, it doesn't matter about the car going by or someone doing something in the environment, you're just a bit more like (makes a relaxed sigh noise) forcefully immersed into it.

Is it like, a relaxed focus?

Yeah, absolutely. I mean, to make music I like to feel like I'm relaxed; if there something on my mind then I quite often - it's quite difficult to remove any external influences or obstructions which I guess is - it's probably also why night-time is quite good to just completely remove any sort of interruption, any sort of external influence and just be completely like, immersed in the process and immersed in what's being made.

When you're writing at night-time, when it's dark, does that feed in to the actual ambience of it as well?

I don't think so; I don't really know. I think I've always liked ambient anyway.

So do you write like, really killer dark stuff at night-time?

Well no; it'd be more that I'd write atmospheric stuff during the day. So whenever I make metal or heavy stuff that's in the day, but it's still very, very atmospheric probably because I'm not much of a natural instrumentalist I can't - I'm not so good at making melodies. I think it's more my personal preference; most of the music I listen to even when it was metal wasn't really melody driven but was more 'chunk' and atmosphere driven and so that is - it's just an electronic extension of that I think. I don't think it really has much to do with the time of day it is.

When we spoke before you were saying about a similarity between industrial metal type atmospheric-ness and psytrance. Like, it having a kind of drone thing going on underneath and then harmonics kind of pinging off that almost and like building up a texture. Rather than having a melody, having textures?

Textures; yeah, I guess. If I listen to heavy music stuff I like - at the moment it's kind of Angelic Process which is really heavy, quite heavily drone influenced but still quite industrial so it's still got that atmosphere that I like within the music, but I don't think also this necessarily would be just music. I like when it comes to sort of - an arts and film project I had to do for (name) once was to write a piece of music for a picture, and I found like, the sort of imagery that I've always associated my music to would be Giger. A Giger landscape, not one of his pictures of aliens or babies but just sort of like an abstract, weird alien landscape which is quite dark and quite atmospheric at the same time - and biomechanical. And again 'Alien' is one of my favourite films as well, so just atmosphere in general is what I try and incorporate into the music, whether it be metal or whether it be drone or psytrance or chill out.

So it's kind of like mood, creating a feeling of particular place or world or that kind of thing, rather than melody or expressing something like an emotion?

Yeah I think the way I explained it in what I said to (name) actually, was the soundtrack for an alien world almost, or a soundtrack to biomechanical world. That is sort of not the main influence for the music, but certainly it could be used for that.

What elements of the music you write make it psychedelic?

The little subtle noises, sense of space. A soundscape, like in a forest with forest creatures appearing at points around you.

And what about other people's music?

Like Goa, or Shpongole for e.g. use an instrument from classical Indian music, I can't remember what it's called, so that brings in the spiritual side of the psychedelic thing (I'm not really into that but there's a section of the scene that are).

I suppose as bands in the 60s and 70s also used classical Indian music there's also a reference to that era of psychedelia as well?

Yeah, I think it's more the little subtle noises and certainly for me, I'm not really one who is big on this sort of like ethnic instruments and stuff, unless is done in a really cool way, in like a bit of a different way. I don't really sort of go out of my way to make music psychedelic; if it ends up psychedelic, great, but then also it depends who's listening to it and do they count it as psychedelic - so I might not, but someone else might. But the little sounds and stuff I guess would be counted as psychedelic, but it's not there for that purpose, that's more sound design, whereas when it comes to like, creating the atmosphere, the sort of feeling that you want to put out, it is more focused towards that than making something that is making people go "Oh, I'm tripping really hard on this!".

So is it like, its building that place, that space to escape to?

Yes.

I saw somebody said on Facebook the other day, I think it was (name) and he said "I really hate lots of Psytrance today because it's got too many breakdowns - and it's not necessarily the breakdown itself that I don't like but the frequency of them." People go "There's too much psy and not enough trance" i.e. there was lots of little noises and loads of breakdowns with atmosphere, but not enough beat to keep you in the trance type thing. But you would go the other way and say it's about a sense of space and lots of different subtle noises...?

Yeah, I mean the trance element of it is incredibly important I think because the whole reason the music is actually psychedelic hasn't got anything to do with the sounds that are being played it is to do with... the rhythmic - like Native Americans can sit there banging a couple of drums and because it's got rhythm and variety to it, but not as much as available with a synth, just that trance-like state I feel is for more psychedelic than anything you can put into it.

So in terms of psychedelicalness, what's more important to you? Is it the creation of a soundscape and the kind of like world - alien world - and that being psychedelic because it takes your mind away somewhere else, or is it kind of the trance and rhythmic aspect of it?

It's a bit of both really, can't really have one without the other and I would probably agree with (name) that breakdowns are taken - it's nice to have every now and then but they break

that trance; I mean it's supposed to be trance it's not supposed to be jump-up party music. Well...it is supposed to be jump up party music!

Its purpose is to carry you and take you on a little journey somewhere whether it's sonically or whatever and I think if it's constantly being broken I mean psytrance people aren't the ones to put their hands in the air and go 'Yeaaaaah!' (makes sound of build up to the drop) they just want it to keep going and keep going and keep going and this is why a lot of people say it's relentless and too intense.

On that same Facebook thread I read, someone said "I went to see Perfect Stranger who I really like and nearly cried because there was a breakdown like every 2 minutes and it seemed to have gone really commercial".

Yeah, it gets really annoying. For me a breakdown should come - if there's going to be a breakdown - it should be about every 15 minutes or so. Four breakdowns over an hour: that's fine. Maybe three, maybe less.

And when you say breakdowns, do you mean something quite extended?

No. No I hate extended. No, this is just me personally, but I hate extended breakdowns.

So like, how long would you make a breakdown?

Maximum 16 bars. If I was feeling really, really cheeky and I wanted to add something interesting I might go to 32 bars but it's very, very rare because I think the music doesn't need to stop every two minutes it doesn't need to break the trance. It breaks the music; it just doesn't actually serve anything productive. It also becomes too formulaic, as I'm sure you've seen looking through Soundcloud. It's very easy to predict when listening to a song: you've probably got about 32 bars, maybe 16 bars for the intro, 32 bars for getting the song going, then a bar break, then another 32 bars of something; it will pick up for another 16 bars, then a 16 bar break and then it will go into the last 32 bars of the track. And then the next track comes on in exactly the same formula and when you're trying to mix that and you're playing that, the reason it's done as far as I'm aware is the first part of it before the first mini break will be missed out because - and just go straight into the upbeat part of the song and the last bit of the song you'll probably miss out, so you only actually have got about three or four minutes of the song within that and within that this breakdown. Then you've got three songs, all of them you're just playing four minutes of that song and each of them have breakdown, so in eight minutes you can have two breakdowns.

Oh right - I see what you mean.

And it just ends up at the point where if it's a bad DJ or if it's a bad - not necessarily bad but in my view of this, bad - having a breakdown every four or five minutes is awful, because it really...if you're dancing to it - and you also find that when you make the music as well, it's just not really that productive and unless you can do something really, really like *good* with it there's not really that much need for them I don't think.

What you mean like, in the sort of the structure of it all or whatever...?

I guess it'd be odd looking at a painting where the painter has left just one strip of the canvas white, the rest of it - it's progressive. It's just on a little bit of it. At first you look at it, then you think "this is quite artistic, it's quite original. This is quite new" but then if every single piece of work they do just has a smear of Tippex down it, after a while it becomes a staple of that work and you just come to expect that. And because of what psytrance is, everything is on for 8, 16, 32 beats so you know when a breakdown's coming, you know when it's going to happen, you know when it is going to end and you can usually guess that it's going to have a (makes build up noise) in it, it might have this big noise. It very, very rarely something that does it different. And for me, if I do a breakdown I normally have something in there like

percussion, something to keep the rhythm flowing, kick and keep it going because is nothing worse than dancing, and then you stop. Every now and then - fine, whatever, go for it.

Generally how long your tracks?

Tracks I'd say are between five and seven minutes.

So if you only have one breakdown every 15 minutes, does that mean some of them don't have any at all?

Not everyone writes like that but for me certainly, I have a breakdown every few tracks. I generally tend to - there will be sort of little quick mini breaks just to sort of give it a stop-start effect, because going for 15 minutes does get a bit boring; you need something to mix it up.

I've found when I've been listening to things that the little mini break can signal or signpost different sections as well just give a little lift for a second a couple of seconds then it goes back into the beat, or something like that.

Yes and it just sort of breaks the flow quickly. It's quick enough that it can continue and keep you interested but, it's not at a point where - because it's after a while you get bored. You're dancing and then all of a sudden it stops and a minute and a half later, it's still stopped and you're just sort of left there in a club or a squat with a loads of people around you and everyone's just come out of that zone they were in, like no one is in the place they were in 30 seconds ago you know? You're all in a completely new place - but quite often people are going "For fuck's sake! Like, *another* breakdown!" or maybe they're looking really...

...that they don't know where to look or something?

Yeah or what to do. At least with the music there you can dance.

And then you're just left with the floaty-hands-dance when the beat run out!

Yeah and then you just look like a bit of a knob-head!

Like back in my Goth dancefloor days!

Yeah, it's not that much different really! Yeah, I don't like breakdowns with everything, but in moderation it's a really, really useful, fun and effective tool.

Also, going back to what you were saying about the regularity, the regular length of sections/bars, things being done in multiples of eight. Some really good progressive metal bands I've heard, they purposefully will go from time signature to time signature and have an irregular bar so that you can't predict when the next bit of music is coming in. I know they have to keep the pulse going to get the trance in psytrance, but do you... does it like, just completely not work if it's out of time in a bar/ section? Could you make a breakdown that was like, 13 bars and an extra beat?

Yeah I've done it; it works. That often happens - that's been done quite a lot. What isn't done though is changing into 7/8 time signature then 3/4, that's never, never done. A few people have done that and it can work if done well, it's something that I've done once or twice and I might just be saying it works because I've done it, but it adds something a little... Shpongles done it.

But then it's easier to do with downtempo stuff I guess, especially if you've got world music influences like they have (sings a bit of Shpongles 'Around the world in a tea daze', Latin-style syncopated tune) and things like that? Where you got these swung beats and then go in to 5/8, or like whatever.

I guess it is yeah, harder with usual trance that people do mix up with triplets and stuff, but it's still 4/4.

Or... 12/8 - yeah, they're not like, doing the waltz or something!

That's the thing yeah, on the software from Cubase I can just click the option to have it in triplets or can click on the option to have a bit of swing; you don't have to put it into the 12/8 time signature, it just does it automatically for you so most people probably aren't even moving out of the 4/4 range, they're just clicking a button. I mean there are some different time signatures and it works quite well with people. Actually, if you want to keep the crowd interested in what's going on, that's probably the way to go about it, but it's just now that formula of "this what psytrance is, I'm going to make it like this because this is how psytrance is made" and in that sense it's getting a bit boring.

I suppose if it was like IDM, which is a bit more 'home listening' and getting a bit more into the intricacies of the music and a bit more experimental or whatever, then I suppose there could be a crossover between like Psybient and IDM.

I think there always needs to be moderation with it though, I mean what I think about IDM ...and I think you mentioned some metal bands as well that go into different time signatures - the one that springs to mind is Opeth - then you get (or Meshuggah) you get other bands who are like "Oh yeah, we can do this technical stuff" and then it just ends up becoming a load of technical wankery. And excuse me if I'm offending any IDM fans, but I do see a lot of IDM - what I've heard of IDM just ends up coming across as technical and creative thought that to me, I don't really think like "Oh I'm going to sit down and make a really good tune" (makes random experimental noises)!

It's something to sit in your armchair and smoke a pipe and stroke your beard to!

"Hmmm yeah, I can really see where he was going with this!"

Autechre is probably a very good example because when he first started doing something, it's new, all of these ideas and it's interesting, it's something different, but then once you've been flogging that horse for so long (I mean, not in the same vein) but (name) got me the newest album and he's just flogging the style and thrown in a bit of glitch because that's what we hear at the moment. And it's the same no matter what genre, so if that was going to move into psytrance it would have to be done exceptionally well with exceptional moderation, but as soon as it becomes commonplace there can't be any moderation because everyone wants to make that music.

To what extent do you have your audience and/or potential location/venue in mind when working on a track you are writing?

Hardly at all - it's really a hobby for me so I'm not led by pleasing people. I might write a bit and think "That'd sound really good in a warehouse party" or something like that. The music I've made has never really been accessible music for people. With the music I write at the moment it's downtempo, but it's really dark downtempo and it's psytrance, but it's slowed down psytrance. And a lot of people would probably say "Oh, that's not really psytrance because it's not the right speed" or "This isn't chill because it's too fast" but in the end, at the moment that's the style of music that I enjoy, that's the style of music that I'm playing out, that's the sort of music I'm enjoying making. Yeah it's nice think "This section I can kind of imagine 5 AM, 6 AM in a woods party, the sun is coming up, this part sounds really euphoric, I think people might quite like this" but it's never been "I'll make this for 5 o'clock in the morning when people are feeling euphoric".

Has your writing style changed over time? How?

Yes, definitely. I've gone from metal to Gabber then writing Full-On London 145bpm stuff, Dark Psy and then Forest. Yeah I mean I'd say that the Dark Psybient is just an extension of the Forest-y stuff which I haven't been making that much of lately because of uni. I've taken a massive gap from it - from music so it is what I was doing before, just a bit slowed down really. Writing music has also got easier over time - more natural, more flow. Using a controller instead of a keyboard has made it more about movement, more like playing a musical instrument.

Does the music you write reflect your identity? (E.g. personality characteristics, beliefs/outlook, mental state, personal history etc.)

Yeah, I'd say so. Each different 'period' of writing over the last 7-8 years has pretty much reflected where I was at the time mind-set wise.

Does culture outside the psytrance scene influence your music? How? What about everyday life, or news about what's happening in the UK?

I don't think wider culture influences the music really, no. If anything the music is in opposition to all that, because it's about an escape from that kind of thing - society and the city etc. The whole sort being away at night on my own in a different mind-set is very like, getting away from it. It's a form of escapism really, isn't it? Same as people going to the parties to listen to the music.

Has the vibe at the events you play changed over the years? How?

Not really, I mean the vibes of parties have, but I don't really play big London squat parties and the vibes there are - vibes there definitely changed over the last eight years. But the sort of places I actually play generally are quite small intimate little festivals and parties which no, because they've not really reached the mainstream level that squats have they're not really... they're more sort of 200 people gatherings instead of 3000 students in a warehouse.

So is it the commercial aspect of it which has changed it then? Is it just bigger than it used to be?

Bigger, and without sounding... People go there for the music who - you get generally certain types of people - not always, obviously - but the majority of the people will be of a certain mind-set, probably within a certain counterculture, a certain minority whereas now you just get students who want out to go out and get fucked and go to a rave. It is primarily students, people who are in their first year of uni, who - maybe not so much now - had seen *Skins* or something like that and gone "I want to go to a rave", that's what started it. Five years ago you didn't have as many 'normal' people going to squat parties or to woods parties; there were some but there weren't as many. As time changed the clientele, people going to the parties, definitely changed and I think that things like *Skins* and the portrayal of 'illegal raves' on TV has boosted people to want that. I mean there's a lot of people I heard talking about Tribe of Frog because they had seen it on *Skins*. In *Skins* they were like "You going to Tribe of Frog tonight?" and so they looked up Tribe of Frog. Students don't stick around for long because they're not there to go to an all-night party, it's to go back to their friends a few days later to tell them how edgy they've been. It is! It's like "What did you do at the weekend?", "Oh I went bowling with my parents, what did you get up to?", "Oh nothing really, we just went to an *illegal rave*!" But yeah it did definitely get a massive exposure about four years ago whether it is within the student population or not.

But then there was a bit of like, a rave Renaissance as well, because of the whole explosion of that in the States over the past five years - all those kind of EDM 'shows' as they call them over there and 'arm candy' and this going all national. Whereas it was a bit niche before, that's kind of really exploded - is it part of that, maybe a bit of a

Renaissance sort of thing, where it's all just seen as EDM or rave or whatever and you just going to 'a party' no matter what genre of music it is?

I think the overall thing has had a bit of a revival because it seems like the late 80s and the early 90s was like when the rave scene was really big and then throughout the 90s - obviously I was only seven years old at the time so I can't really comment too much - but I know there were parties going on but it doesn't seem like they were anywhere near the frequency or magnitude they are now. And then when I started going in the mid-2000s or something, that's when like, the parties I was going to were small - there'd be the like, one massive Acid Monkey party at the end of the year - and maybe the Easter- then at the time with maybe two, one or two that the others did. Bom Shanka, they did a party, £5, a little pub and Psynon to support them, for £5, a little venue - none of them were 3000+. Alright, at most 500 maybe, 1000 for the larger ones but that's it. As time progressed over those five years where I was actually partying I saw the crowds change from - there used to be a lot more older people and in more unconventional clothing, then I saw a change from that to the crowd getting a lot younger with an a lot more tracksuit bottoms or shirts or jeans - which there is no problem with that whatsoever - it's just I noticed that there seemed to be less harem and parachute pants and more jeans and belts than there were before and whether *Skins* can be blamed for that I don't know, probably not.

It's maybe one thing amongst lots of other reasons.

But it's certainly over that period of time that it massively, massively took off.

Do styles of psytrance correspond with particular geographic regions? If 'yes', can you give an example that stands out to you?

Yeah, Israel has their Full-On which is quite melodic and upbeat, then South Africa is sort of harder and faster but has a lighter mood as well and then European styles tend to be even harder than those, but more nuanced sounding.

And you mentioned the London 145bpm sound earlier?

Yes, the London sound is generally around 145bpm and it's gritty, dirty and industrial.

Is there a UK style (or a style which is particular to a wider region that includes the UK)?

The UK in general seems to like harder, darker, faster music styles - think Drum 'n' Bass and Dubstep for e.g.

Why do you think that is?

I think it's to do with the setting, the location of the parties - like in London, the urban, the city, warehouses and industrial spaces. In Bristol the lighter styles seemed more popular for a long time, maybe because they have events in really big clubs and there are lots of students so it's a bit more commercial or clichéd. They seem to be going towards the darker styles now as well now, a bit more like the London sound.

Up North it's different again, the Rave scene was massive up there and still is really influential. There's more glow sticks, neon/UV clothes, alien designs etc. and there's more speed and other amphetamines. You can really notice the difference from that down here in the South; there's more psychedelics and more of a floaty, hippy aesthetic and an outdoor/nature/environmentalist vibe.

So we discussed before how the most popular sound for the UK for while seem to be the London 145 BPM kind of gritty full-on type thing but how like, Forest is kind of subsuming that a bit.

Yes so it seems, Forest and darker side certainly seems to be like gravitating towards the heavier faster darker side of Psytrance in London.

And we discussed earlier, if you think about dubstep, drum and bass and metal - the UK liking dark, transgressive music sort of thing, it kind of speaks to that. But also when you are saying about things getting a bit formulaic and being the same speed all the time and being bit same-y, Forest kind of takes maybe some of those gritty, darker moods the UK likes and adds in a bit of the psychedelicalness of like, a more progressive vibe. I'm not talking about the BPM here, but a bit more like...

Experimentation.

Yeah experimentation. A bit less kind of like, a break here and a new beat and breakdown there, but more like a soundscape throughout the whole thing or something like that.

Yeah, yeah definitely.

Thinking about the Rave scene - I've often thought the whole thing about the CJA and POA forcing big parties inside and how it might have changed the style of UK psytrance. Like, you know how earlier you were saying location/setting affects the sort of styles that are popular?

I'd disagree with that actually, I don't think that's really impacted the music because artists play all over the world in different settings and even here in the UK there's usually an underground event going on somewhere not too far away, even if you're playing in a club. People write for those underground settings I think, even if they have to play it down the Volks as an intermediate step. Yeah I'd use Psymmetrix as the example for that: people have like, the typical English sound, that English sound and they've got it done very, very well, but they will be playing on beaches in Goa, but they don't really write for a beach in Goa, they're writing for the London scene and they'll be playing there at the - probably constrained to squats actually, but they probably would have had to have intermediate stages where it wouldn't have quite fitted.

Something that came up in conversation with (name) was that people were saying to "Well you're not getting any bookings because you're writing that melodic stuff" and they were getting interest from people in other countries but it's not what people want to hear at parties here.

It's funny, when I was making Darkpsy and I approached parties they told me to make fluffier stuff!

Really?!

Yeah absolutely - more so [name] than anyone else but the [name] guys, a few London parties, when I approached them with my darkpsy I was told "That will be too dark; go away and come back with something a bit more fluffier and lighter".

When was that?

Five years ago... 5 or 6 years ago maybe? Yeah, about 2010/2011 so over the last 4 or 5 years it has been a very big change from what it is now. If I went with the music, maybe not to (name) but some of the other parties, if I went there with the music I used to make, it'd probably be right up their alley now.

You were like, trailblazing at the time!

Yeah, I was just ahead of the times!

How does your music fit into that UK style (or style of a region that includes the UK)?

It doesn't really.

Well I suppose you just answered that because you said it didn't at the time but it might now be more popular - is it quite difficult to tell if something's going to be well received?

If it's something quite different then yeah. If I were to go to parties now with the music I'm making I will probably get turned down for a lot of them - maybe in like chill out stage but I'd never get a main stage slot with the music I'm making now. But even still it's very, very hard to tell where it can go, what can happen and that's why I often find that the people who try and make their music to what is currently popular never succeed, because it takes for five years a few to develop your style so what most people don't know is people who are now popular, they've been doing this for the last five years, developing that sound, making that tune, doing everything - and what they've got now is a finished product. People who are hearing it now say "Well, I'll do that" but quite often it can take them another five years on top of that to develop that style, so they either come out with stuff that isn't that good or by the time it is good enough, that style has really gone and the next thing has come along and they go chasing that.

Some producers say "Well don't really listen to psytrance, I don't listen to other people's music, I just write it" and maybe it's for that reason?

Not to get influenced by it.

Are there different styles in different areas of the UK? So you were saying like, the London sound, you have up North which is more rave influenced and different drugs, in the South a bit more of a floaty aesthetic and psychedelics and then possibly in Bristol quite a student crowd and maybe a big club, kind of thing?

Yeah - also what I found quite distinctive myself is the North side have a lot more like, hard elements to it, like hard techno, whereas the South doesn't really have that as much. I don't know whether that you can go with an East and West divide on that as well, but certainly the further up I've gone, the sound has been far more 'in your face', with Hard House or Hard Style influences to it, whereas the South doesn't seem to have that as much.

3. Chris, 14.03.16 - Producer and Educator

So, you were telling me in your email that you used to produce psytrance back in the '90's to early 2000's I think you said.

Yeah, probably, sort of 1996 to 2002 really.

Ok, do you still write?

Not all that stuff anymore, no, no. I do other, other things, I mean we're doing a Hugh Davis concert. I do quite a lot of performance and I don't really make much music of my own, well except for improvisation so it's more live really.

What sort of music do you play live out of interest?

I still use synthesis, and analogue synths, and modular synths so it's pretty improv. or structured improv.

So how acquainted are you with the psytrance scene nowadays?

I do the odd gig here and there.

So it's DJing and things?

Yeah, I haven't played for, when's the last time? I supposed I must have done, I did something in Belgium a couple of years ago, and then a couple before that.

So you've got an idea currently how the music is, and...?

A little bit, not much. I still know people that produce it and I've kind of worked on a couple of tracks with friends, and you know. So yeah there's odd bit that may be coming out with my stuff on it, but indirectly.

So when you were writing, and on the, I guess, collaborative stuff that you've done recently as well, what sort of genre would you, how would you describe the music if it falls in to a genre or whatever else, however else you want to describe it?

It's completely contingent on when, because the genre, genres, there's a whole lot to be said about genre formation. So, to start with when I started making it, there wasn't really a section in the record shop. You know, techno and other sorts of things. You had to find records that sort of fitted in with what you could've played, or heard at a particular acid party and then there was usually Gumbo parties (these parties happened in south London, I think around Wandsworth or Vauxhall) and TIP, you know TIP records. I would go to TIP parties and those sorts of things. There was Tyssen Street in Dalston, which was the main venue for all sorts of different parties going off there, and there was some that went on in Southwark, there was a place in Southwark, like a warehouse type thing. So you had to find music from various different sources before there was a section in the record shop, and then of course a lot of music was exchanged on DAT and it wasn't mainstream enough to be reviewed so before it got given its name, it was very difficult, once it gets given a name then there might be a Goa section or a psy. I'm trying to remember what it would've been called, it might have been psy-trance but probably not. It might have been trance.

Sort of retrospectively given how we look at these genres and sub-genres within its day, how would you categorise it?

It's difficult again because we used to call it trance, but what people call trance now is not what we called trance then. What we could call trance today, we would've called Euro.

Yes, exactly.

So, I tend to call, and I have done for years, what I do psychedelic techno because it's psychedelic, the adjective, and it's techno because it distinguishes it from house.

Sure, sure.

It's about electronic sounds primarily. It's about new sounds with electronics, so that might not be an acknowledged genre necessarily but I would call it psychedelic techno.

That's absolutely fine, ok so.

You would get away with calling it Goa or Psy-trance but my preference would be what I just said.

Great, ok. So you mentioned DAT tapes and things. I just wanted to ask you about the software and hardware that would use and you did use. What sort of thing were you working with?

Initially Atari ST running Cubase, a cracked Cubase and Atari ST's were plentifully available so that was the standard thing. They had a MIDI port, they were rock solid, they were

standard, that's what we had. That was before laptops were really a thing. So Cubase probably version one point whatever it was. We had a DAT, I had a DAT machine because that's what you had to mix on to and I had a sampler. So I had a Roland S770 sampler. I really liked the Roland samplers, the key thing with that was that it had a decent screen but you could plug a mouse and monitor into it so you could edit it quite easily. It had eighteen meg of RAM and you had to then plug a zip drive into it as an external hard disk so it was all run using SCSI. You could then also link it up, later on when we went to Mac you could link it up in a SCSI chain with the Mac on one end of the chain and then your zip drive and your sampler. Zip drive in the middle and then sampler on the other end, and probably a CD burner. It got complicated.

It did! It sounds really complicated.

Let's just start at the beginning. At the beginning was an Atari ST, a Roland S770. I had a Korg MS10 which I bought some years before that, a monophonic analogue synth. A Korg Mono/Poly which is another monophonic synth, and eventually I got an ARP 2600 which was nice, and then I had, one of the key things was a BEL BD80 delay, a digital delay but it had a CV (Control Voltage) and gate input. So you could start to control things with the voltages. A Roland SBF325 flanger which is an analogue flanger but it had CV control and that was the key, it was really key to me, and a Soundcraft Spirit 16:8:2 mixing desk and a couple of old, there was a Peavey Ultraverb multi-effects which I used for delay and an ARP Multiverb Alpha for reverb. You could have one or two reverbs, or reverb and two delays.

It sounds pretty expensive right, back then?

Some of them were, but some of them just weren't. Like the Korg MS10 was about ninety quid you know. Odd bits and pieces, you know an Atari ST was not much money. I can't remember how much that was but probably not much more than a hundred quid or something.

What about recently, you said you had done some collaborative things. What sort of software and hardware do you use?

The collaborative things I haven't done the sequencing so I've taken my modular synths done and used sounds. I've plugged in all sorts of stuff so I sometimes use guitar, not that you would know that it's a guitar, it's just something to control.

So at the moment whether it's psychedelic techno or other things that you're involved with, you don't use Ableton, or Logic, or Cubase or anything like that do you?

I use Logic, I've been using Logic since I went from the Atari to the Mac, that's when I started using Logic. I've been using Logic since version 2 and still use it now. So that's what I use for recording, basically everything. I use Ableton a bit for live performances as well and I use MAX/MSP because I did a Master's in Sound Design at the University of Edinburgh, and Max/MSP was used in several modules on the course - and I've been doing all sorts of other stuff. With MAX you can build whatever you want. I remember when Ableton came out I didn't quite make the leap to it because I was using Logic for live stuff in 1999 until 2002 but I was aware of Ableton coming out and I would definitely have looked at it if I had done more live stuff, but I packed it in. I am using it now for certain things. Without any doubt that's what I would use for live if I was doing live techno.

Just thinking back to when you were writing some psychedelic techno. What is your most typical creative process when you write music. So are things like whether it's more structure and planned, or experimental and exploratory.

Generally, there was a general pattern I suppose. I did quite a lot solo but quite a lot in pairs with various different people so your working process would be different according to who

you were working with but my own process, if I'm left to my own devices would generally be... I often come up with some sort of idea for a sound, it's almost all sound based, so certainly in the early days I would be working with out what if I plugged this thing into that and then I could control the voltage of this machine. Pushing machines, it was all about pushing machines into areas of boundary conditions. So, for example the flanger, you could put a voltage into it but with the ARP you had plus or minus ten volts so you could start adding or subtracting voltages and mixing that with other things so I thought let's try and put minus ten volts into it and you start to then really change, it becomes not a flanger at all any more, it just becomes a delay, but a really crunchy delay. You could move that around so then, you've got a concept of how to do something with a tool, with a machine, with an instrument, then you push it into a territory where you get, where you find interesting sounds, then that becomes the basis of a track. There was a track that I did called "X1"²¹ under the name Process, and that clearly grew from exactly that experimentation, putting large negative voltage through this flanger and that's the tune. So then you've got some sort of core idea. I mean sometimes, we used to use the term hook in the traditional pop music sense, you need a hook, it's sort of like that, I guess it's pretty much the same sort of concept, but in those cases you would be working on getting a particular process, that's what I called myself Process, making a sound then you sort of frame that, and an awful lot of it is music by numbers. Everything generally is in eight bars, or sixteen bars. There are these sorts of things that are given, now that I'm an academic I would call these things "enabling constraints", but back in the day it was just, you need something else to happen every eight bars for dancing, you've got to keep people interested. So the form and the structure, you're limited by the beats per minute, I mostly would do 140, 142. 142 was a favourite. The fastest tune I did was 150 and the slowest was probably 130 possibly. Those sorts of things are kind of given really, listening to other records you've got to make your tune fit into a set so those have done. Within those frameworks I would grow a tune sort of organically from finding a moment, or finding some sort of key sound and then try to shift that and make that move, and then you'd think of course you'd need some sort of bassline unless it's the bassline that you've started with and then there aren't that many options for the kick drum patterns. The high hats, I had a Roland Octapad - a MIDI controller in the form of 8 drum pads that you hit with drumsticks to trigger sounds via MIDI. The sounds were usually samples so I could actually play in with drumsticks, play in hat patterns and percussion. Still using MIDI, recorded as MIDI and using the sampler but you could get quite a lot of feel, certainly from velocity patterns so that was quite neat. But then just to go on to working with certain people, working with Simon Posford for example, we would experiment make sounds, make tunes, make noises and sounds and maybe riffs and things but creating the track, he would start at the beginning, get the intro done until it was absolutely right and then go to the beginning and build it up in a very linear fashion. By the time we got to doing the outro the track was finished, which is the opposite to how I would do it. I would start with something and then build it round, it might be the middle, it might be the beginning, I don't know.

Most people that I've spoken to would take that approach as well so it's quite unusual to hear.

Simon's very particular, I did two tracks with him and that's his way of working.

Here's the point where I'm going to ask about your state of mind when you're being creative so this could include things like we're talking here an ideal scenario for being creative and writing music so either being alone, working with people. Whether you

²¹ Released on Matsuri Productions "Abstract Phaze" <https://www.discogs.com/Various-Abstract-Phaze/master/35360>

have any psychedelic enhancements of anything, the location. What's the ideal scenario?

Well you've got to be able to make the sound, the noise so if you're out in the countryside that's great. Make sound whenever you want, and at what time you like. I tend to work in the evening and at night and certainly quite a lot of starting at 10, 11 and then going through until 9 in the morning, that sort of thing. Why? Well one of the reasons is you certainly get fewer distractions; you don't get people popping in, or phoning you up, or emailing you. You get naturally away from distraction, which is quite important because you need to take ideas and follow them though. I could never just do an hour of composing and certainly I would never call it composing, but an hour of making music then going off and doing some filing or tax returns. I would have to be in the right frame of mind, the right mood, and that's usually off and away. Although quite often you might go out for an evening, go to the pub or go and see friends and then come back, or do something, then come back home and spend a good three or four hours. When you're in that positive mood, make music. Simon's quite interesting he wouldn't tend to start until after midnight then go to sleep eventually about 10 in the morning. It was completely the opposite way around so you would go to his place in Dorset and you just wouldn't see the daylight much at all.

Is any part of that, continuity, which is what I think you were saying there, but also creating some kind of, to use an academic term, liminal space in which to work? So recreating a kind of atmosphere in which you might expect to hear this kind of music?

I think that you could analyse it in that way but I wouldn't necessarily say that's deliberately engineered in that way, but it's a fair point. When you're making it, when you're in that, when that's your occupation, you're not analysing it from the same perspective. You've got a very individual perspective so you might not notice that certain facets, so I wouldn't say that that's not something deliberate but I wouldn't say that it's implausible, but certainly you've got to look at when this sort of music was being played which would be, parties wouldn't start until midnight because you're taking about outdoor parties really, not a club. You haven't got the licencing issues, it's out in a piece of land in the countryside somewhere, and you know maybe it's two or three hours from London. Often they would be in the west country, or Wales, or Hereford, so it's quite a flog to get there from London so things are starting to happen about midnight and you'd be dancing all the way through until maybe midday or two o'clock the next afternoon so it's got to be more than a coincidence making music at that time, you're making music to be played at that time so you could plausibly draw a link here I would say and I know that I've dodged the question so far.

No, not at all, that's a great answer.

In terms of mental states and substance, it would be very hard to make music if you were tripping, if you were taking LSD or mushrooms or anything because you can't just operate machinery at all, but you certainly take those experiences and you remember those experiences. You use those experiences that you might have had under the influence of psychedelics which were absolutely fundamental. I don't think you can make psychedelic music without having that experience because you don't know what those sounds you're making are going to do, how they are going to be listened to.

What would you consider is psychedelic, had psychedelic qualities in the music you wrote, if you can indeed say that. I guess from what you've just said as well, whether in writing for that psychedelic experience, the embodied experience, whether you kind of using sounds to recreate what you might hear and see whilst you're tripping or whatever else, or whether it is to complement that.

Absolutely it's to complement it, from my perspective it's to complement that. It was designing music to be listened to, dancing hopefully in a nice field in the middle of the

English countryside with a bloody great big oak tree in the middle of it. Under the influence of LSD, that's it, that's what I was making music for so in the context of probably dancing for eight hours or longer, or twelve hours, so it's definitely a trance state. I hesitate to use the word trance because of the contemporary genre association, which has absolutely nothing to do with what we were doing then. The usage of the term has changed, but trance as is a ritual state of doing something repetitive for a long time until you get into an altered mind state, mind and body state, the music was completely made for that from my perspective. That means there are two things going on, you've got the physical, that's why the BPM is really important, and getting the right groove. That's why I used to absolutely hate house music, because the grooves in house music are all absolutely about keeping a lid on things and not allowing you to lose control, and the beats were all to be danced to in high heels kind of thing. I really had problems with the whole house music vibe, the whole style. It could be down to the quantising patterns. Whatever it is but it's, with psychedelic music you've got to be able to dance, not necessarily while you are high even actually, but if the music's right you don't have to be at all, but you've got to have something so that your body can keep moving. That works on very different levels. You would tune a kick drum, when I was making kick drums, I used to make all the drums sounds pretty much... The kick drum, you would tune it, get the tuning of the fundamental frequency so you could feel it here or there depending on the frequency, i.e. in the chest or in the belly or anywhere from the pelvis to the neck, and that was quite a few of us used to do that so that's something where you're making a direct physical connection to the body and how you want that to be felt really. Music's not just through your ears, so on the one hand you've got the kick drum and the bassline, and the general groove of the track is what helps the body to dance. Now if you're not under any influence of chemicals then you need to be able to have music that you can easily keep dancing to, that's really tricky but you can do it if you know what you're listening for, and if you go out dancing enough and you do that enough yourself you know what you need to do, it's quite hard to describe. That's one element of it, the other element is the psychedelic element which is for the mind so to speak, it's like body and mind if you want to make those sort of distinctions. That means you need something, so that your body is doing the trance thing, it's repeated movements, or repeated beats, that's been taken care of so then you need something for your mind. That means making sounds that are... it's usually the high frequencies. They're the sort of "acid sounds" that you might find people mention, you could probably do measurements to find out what sort of frequencies they are. If you listen to the TIP records, The Infinity Project you hear those filter sweeps, and it's in the mid-range, the high-mid. It's completely characterised by filter, low pass filter or band-pass filter movements or high-pass filter even. They need to be moving, not just in with the beats. That's something that can be completely disconnected with the beats so that you have this sense of movement, a journey, which is why it's psychedelic, taking you on a journey to somewhere. Those are really key elements, that's probably the sort of element I would start with, putting voltages through flangers or whatever it is, to get something which is moving and plastic if you like, in that sense. You use your hands for that because typically you're dancing, your body is dancing at this lower speed, and your arms are going a bit faster but it's your hands that can start to actually embody those sorts of movements which aren't necessarily metronomic, and that's important as well. You get to certain moments in a good party where the whole dance floor is just sort of carving out space. It doesn't happen at every party but that's the absolute moment for the thing that I would always try to make music in order to achieve.

I'm going to move on because of the time.

Yeah keep going, I would very rarely make any of this music without smoking some pot.

Yes, actually other people have said that, it would be difficult really to take anything else, but pot does give you a sense of that.

Specifically hash as well, well actually even more specifically charas is really good, but that comes along with the whole use of all the Indian image. With Shivas and all that sort of thing, with Indian charas although it depends on what you can get, you could get some really good Moroccan or whatever it might be.

It can make you paranoid.

It can easily do that, but I think part of it also it that it allows you to switch off from the day and other sorts of things. It helps your imagination; if you're surrounded by the right tools then you can engage your imagination. If you have a deadline, we have to finish this tune by this Friday then you're OK. The danger is when you don't have a deadline, where you're just wibbling about with no purpose, it just is useless, but if you do that and you can focus it's great. There were tunes I did when you had three people in the studio, it was quite fun. Usually if there's two of you, you would have one person on the computer or on the desk and somebody sofa-surfing. So not looking at the screen, but really using your ears and then just having this different perspective, so able to judge what's going on, is it that right time, should we have something after four bars or something after eight instead of judging everything by looking at the screen, have the perspective. I did a few things with Raja Ram, he wasn't technical, he played the flute but he wasn't really good at the tools but he would sit on the sofa and keep building, keep making pipes and drawing, keeping the energy levels flowing and motivation. "What's that sound you made there, that's fantastic". Having that kind of perspective is really, really important, keeping the energy levels going is a part of it so you could manage the session. If you were smoking a lot of pot you could still make that work.

How, if at all, does the music that you write reflect your identity? Whether that's personal characteristic, or your mental state at the time, or perhaps... Even in terms of wider culture in the UK or something like this. Do those influences make it into the music or not?

That's really hard. You listen to the tunes and you say that's English, or that's Swedish, or that's Israeli. You can kind of tell so that means... when I was DJing, you listen to a lot of music and you could pick that up and you might have preferences as well. I like some of the West Country stuff, English West Country psychedelic stuff was just brilliant.

So there was like a distinction there that you could make between regions as well?

Yeah, but some of that isn't just done on blind testing because you can't really, in the real world you don't do blind testing. You always know a little bit of something, you might know where the record label is, which label it's on. You might know somebody who's involved, there might be connections somewhere. I'm not saying that it's absolutely replicable in a lab by any means, but I think. I don't think I could articulate it right now, I might be able to. I don't know if I could articulate it but certainly I guess I could. The best music for me is made by Drezz, Nervasystem on Elektrik Orgasm, Nervasystem and Aether, their album *Mama Matrix Most Mysterious*²² is just by far the best psychedelic album and it's one of the best psychedelic albums in the wider sense of psychedelic where you'd be including Pink Floyd and Gong and the Ozrics and all of that. The sort of psychedelic garage stuff I don't really rate as being psychedelic, even like The Grateful Dead, a lot of that is not really psychedelic, it's just crusty old blues rock. That's just my definition. Some of their stuff, you can definitely hear their characters in that music, crusty, not that they were crusties so to speak but it had this sort of, a bit broken and really, really playful, you'd have a kick pattern established and then they'd just frame it off by half a beat so on the dancefloor you'd have to pitch this thing up again. They would just fool you, mess around with it, you'd think this thing was coming in

²² <https://www.discogs.com/Nervasystem-Aether-The-Mama-Matrix-Most-Mysterious/release/165935>

and then it didn't, then it did. So there was loads of humour loads of really. They were really playful, but not childishly playful, grown up playful.

Tricksterish or something.

Yeah, tricksterish exactly. Ken Kesey sort of playful. That's something that I really appreciate, I think that Simon Posford was just fantastic in terms of taking you, using absolutely the right frequencies, so super psychedelic, sort of clinically psychedelic but the production was so well done that the sounds were lush and rich and filling the spectrum and he also had some fantastic riffs and melodies that just really didn't go across the line into being cheesy but were still kind of uplifting but without being obvious and cheesy. Benji Vaughan as well, I did lots of work with Benji Vaughan, he did Prometheus and he did Younger Brother with Simon and all that. He was really good at writing riffs that were really catchy but just not cheesy, just.

On the edge of cheesy.

On the edge, but that's brilliant because that would mean that they would get everybody dancing, they would get the girls dancing because there's a lot of stuff that doesn't have too many riffs and is on the other edge of that, all the sort of noisy stuff. Women wouldn't dance to that so much.

Really?

Yeah, not all, but I've DJed a lot, in a lot of places and you can see who dances to what and often to get girls on the dancefloor you have to have a little bit of what we used to call "fluffy" stuff. Sounds disparaging but it's not meant to be at all. It's just an observation and that's one thing I would always, I would love to play Benji's stuff because it just appealed across the whole spectrum. Like where Drez's stuff, I could clear dancefloors, virtually clear them. You'd only have the real crusties with dreads down to their arses. You know, the real psychedelic warriors. I say that, you probably know these kind of people?

Yes, indeed.

I would love to play for them, I would be more than happy for all the kind of pill heads, the weekender pill heads would find it a bit too much and go off. Fine. But the real psychedelic warriors, the people doing psychedelic drugs particularly would really respond to that kind of music and that's the sort of thing I was trying to make as well with my music. It's a roundabout way of getting back to your question about my identity. My identity, I was really keen on technology so all my sounds I would try to make sounds that hadn't been made before, hadn't been heard before. I was listening to various old electronic music records, some of those one on the Turnabout series from the 60's, and Stockhausen sort thing and trying to re-synthesise some of the most outrageous sounds that those guys used to make, and when you re-synthesise you can move them and change them around so trying to synthesise really complicated sounds, rich visceral things and move the sounds in order to move people directly. So the key concept, which I never really succeeded in, but the driving concept was to make "acid sounds", not lots of layers of stuff and all this. Just make one sound that you could manipulate move and that would be the track, the closest I did was this track I did with a friend, an artist friend called Charles Everett and it was a track called *Prismatic*, on one of my CD's, one of the albums. That was really close to it. So yeah, it comes back to the name Process, the idea of setting up processes that would sort of.., Instead of being lots of notes in the riff, the idea was to have something which was going on, which goes somewhere, and gets manipulated and gets bent..

Moving around in the space kind of thing, you've created.

Sort of noise based as in not melodic necessarily, but not being a racket. Something that has melodic elements and movement but not something that you could ever score. So that would be my identity, because plenty of other that were based on MIDI notes and arpeggios that are easily notated, but that would be my...

That would be the core of the stuff the expresses your...

I can give you more details of aspects or elements if you need them if I've just waffled too much.

No, no, this has been absolutely great. That was, I think, my final questions. In fact there were more questions but you've covered a lot of the stuff anyway. You've actually covered in speaking some of the other questions that I've missed out.

If you want to pick up, just pick up any extra bits, get the material now.

One of them was, did your style, your writing style and/or sound change over the time that you were producing?

Yeah, it must have done, must have done. Just by virtue of the fact that you were working with so many different people. You picked up the tricks. It's hard to say whether there's an overall style, or whether your style is made up of small elements of this, that or the other. There are killer little details that you might pick up from somebody working. For example, if you put on a bit of reverb on a hi-hat then it just makes the whole track sound better. Somebody else has worked that out and it might be something that you use and it might changes a certain element, it might do something to the way that you're making music but it's a small detail and it's not overriding. If you take all those little things together and you A/B something from one time period and something from another incorporating lots of little you might see significant stylistic changes. So that's a really difficult question to unpick, and I think it needs an unpicking. If I want to give you a straightforward answer that you could compare with other people, did my style change? I guess, I guess what really changed was the technology and I don't think my style did change because I kept on using certain items, like this Roland flanger, and an Analogue Systems TH-48, which I used to use basically on everything, even if it was only on a small part of the track but that was a complete constant all the way through while I was making records, from *X1* all the way through to the last thing I made in that genre. So there were some real constants there, they were kind of like your instruments. A whole field of study is what is an instrument and what do you think of as an instrument specifically in the studio. I think my style might have evolved but I don't think it changed, does that make sense?

It does, just to go back to something you said quite a lot earlier on about pushing the boundaries of the technologies that you had and that kind of being a driving force in the creation of your music. That kind of struck me as interesting because psy-trance and other electronic dance music forms, they are often described as driven by the progress in technology so that seems a bit like the other way around, that you were taking the technology and forcing it to its limits, and playing around with it, and really using those tools and you just said something about your style didn't change but the technology did as well. In some ways it seems that it's driven by technology, and in some ways you drove the technology to its limits to create something new.

Some of the technologies that changed were that inevitably things became plugins, software. Change is not necessarily an improvement in many situations. One of the things that it does is to give you far more options. So actually you can get into the position of a paralysis of choice. You want to buy toothpaste, you just want to clean your bloody teeth, ten shelves full of toothpaste, it's pointless. So with plugins, plugins, kind of, plugins came in as the same time as downloading, downloading screwed the whole thing. All of a sudden you couldn't get a record deal. I was running a label, within the space of about six months you went from

having firm sales, to sale or return, to "I'll only order some in if someone goes into a record shop and orders it". So that was game over for making money from records. It was all just downloading so that was it and you don't make money from downloading, not enough to pay anything which is still a problem with music at the moment. So there was that technology on one side, on the other side everyone was running around getting the latest plugins, the latest Waves plugins or this download did this or this software instrument, or the Arturia Moog Modular. So all of a sudden you can have a gigantic tens of thousands of pounds worth of Moog synthesiser as a plugin that you've downloaded from a torrent for free. What do you do? If you've spent £20,000 on a Moog modular then you bloody well learn how to use it and you cherish it and you spend all the hours in the day learning how to do that, and making killer sounds out of it. If you've just downloaded something from a torrent then you just mess about with, you do this, do that, it's fine, but the value is important, and the number of options is really important. So when you're really limited and you've only got a couple of mono synths and you can't record anything, you can only record the sum total of all your output to a stereo DAT tape which you can't even edit, then you've really got to learn how to use the technology, and how to push the technology. You don't have to stop learning how to push the technology and use it creatively, just because everything's become easy, it's just because everything's become easy you can redo it, you can do computer automation, you can do so much editing. The drive to doing it, why you might want to do it can change and that can really change what you're trying to do so it's a very complicated relationship with the technology I would say. There's no easy way through this and it might sound contradictory.

It might, contradictions speak volumes actually so it's very interesting. I was going to ask you about to what extent you might use preset sounds and etc. but you've pretty much answered that.

I had a Kurzweil K2000 for a while, but I didn't use it an awful lot. When you're working on a tune, because you're using analogue synths and there's no memory you can spend ages really finely honing a patch with the modular synths. It's all plugged in and every last movement of every last knob, or slider is really critical so you can never recreate that so you have to have this scheme of we've got to finish this tune by Friday or whenever it is, by the weekend, because then I need to make another tune and in order to make another tune that means I can't go back to this, so you do a few different mixes onto the DAT but generally you have to be committed to it, you have to commit to those things, then make the next tune better if you want to make a better tune. You don't have that now.

It sounds like, as you were speaking, I was thinking, the way that you were working sounds like it's got more of a kind of improvisation and performance type element to it rather than being able to pore over something and edit and edit for ages, and that maybe becomes a bit more like a film edit or something like that?

I would say so. I only started getting the multitrack audio into the computer, we did it for the album I suppose. In 1999 we had an 8-track soundcard so by that stage we had a digital desk so you could memorise the desk setting and record stuff into audio and then come back to stuff. We didn't do it that many times but you could do it then, but there was always the question of doing a mix as a performance, always, because you were sending certain signals to the delay and feeding those back, or filtering them. Some things were set up on some of the synths, and you were performing the shapes on the filters in real time as you were doing the mix, as well as having... Sometimes you would record some of those things but generally there was decent amount of performance in the mix - that was important to me, that's still what I do. That's why I still use modular synths for live performance, I don't really use sequencers at all I just use live things. I don't make dance music or that sort of stuff now for whatever reason but the performance has been absolutely critical all the way through, absolutely all the way through, and that would be the same when I'm working with somebody else so I'm going to do this track with Simon Posford for example, I would take the machines

and perform the stuff. He had multitrack capabilities so he would record those as multitracks, but it's still getting the performance angle in and when doing the mix he would still be working the mixing desk and doing the delays and you would get a good take so it's all the way across the line with the performing.

4. Maryam Shakiba 11.07.16 – Dancer, former Flow Artist

Obviously you do Odissi and I'm guessing that is choreographed, pre-choreographed movements?

Yeah exactly, so it's really different, my journey through dance actually started in the whole psychedelic trance scene so that's where my connection with dance began, and that was all very free, spontaneous, everything is obviously completely improvised whenever I'm dancing whereas now I do Odissi, where everything is totally choreographed.

What I'm looking at...is the state of mind that arises when you're moving in an improvisational way to music, and that would encapsulate dancing on a dance floor at a psy event, or your own style that you've developed - is that completely choreographed?

The things that I've been performing, that's also been choreographed, but it is something that I do want to develop in an improvised performance element but that's not something that I've got to yet.

If I just ask you about your dance floor experiences then basically, and then if there's ways in which compared to Odissi, or the times that you've done poi or whatever then you can say, basically let's say you're at a festival and your preparing to go out on your first mission to the dance floor - so in really simple terms, what's going on in your mind, and how are you preparing, and what are you looking forward to, and what does your body feel and all the rest of it?

I'm usually very... when I go to the dance floor, I want to dance, I want to seriously get into it so usually when I'm at a festival, or even at a party, I usually make sure that I do my yoga beforehand - so I'm now the girl that takes a yoga mat to a squat party. Because what I like to do is generally, maybe take about 45 minutes, even up to an hour to really prepare my body and also get my head into a clear and balanced headspace so that then when I go onto the dance floor my body is totally open and ready to dance, and it's not going to feel limited by anything physically, because one thing that I really value in the dance floor experience is that feeling of complete freedom, that you can do anything that you want to. So for me I like to also make sure that I don't want to feel any limitation in my body. Obviously I'm not a ballet dancer or anything, just in terms of what is the most that my body at this moment can do.

Sure, like the potential, sort of thing?

Exactly. I want to be able to know that I can reach that potential and make sure that I'm in a clear calm state so I guess that I'm also... like it's funny in the way that you pump yourself up, "I'm going to the dance floor, it's going to be amazing" but then at the same time, there's definitely like an element I feel in the whole trance scene that when you're really in it and you're really trancing out, it's actually quite, not like peaceful but it does have that kind of clarity, so I guess I want to let my head also get into that thing.

Do you still go to squat parties at the moment?

Not very often, the last that I went to I think was New Year. I've been to, in the last couple of years it's been three a year or something.

If you're going to a squat party, where do you do your yoga warm-up?

Because you don't know what the venue's going to be, generally I have this belief that you will always find the space that you need to find. Sometimes you might find some random corner somewhere, generally. The last squat party that I went to it was really annoying actually because I was trying to do my yoga but then it was like a new year's party and there were people everywhere and people were walking all over my yoga mat and I was trying to not get annoyed because I'm at a squat party, and obviously people are not aware of what's going on, but generally I'll go to the chill out and find somewhere in the chill out so I won't be doing it in the main space because also it can be... Sometimes squat parties get really lucky, well not lucky for the owners of the building, but lucky for us where they get into basically a brand new, just done up place, where all the carpets are really clean and you can find a spot somewhere.

Don't you feel self-conscious?

I think I'm actually a little bit of an exhibitionist, that's a good question actually. I know that people are looking at me but I'm not bothered, I'm not doing it to make a show or anything, but I'm also not bothered, I'm like ok you can stare at me if you like it's fine.

So you can still get in that relaxed and focussed state in the knowledge that people might be looking?

Yeah, I don't know what that is, I don't know why I'm really not bothered.

I'm jealous, I want these powers.

I don't know why, I think it's maybe part of the... I feel like when you go to these parties or any kind of quite intense psychedelic music experience you have different characters, so maybe I feel like I'm just going to be that girl that does yoga and so I think maybe that's why I don't... OK I'm just going to be that person. Also I think it does help that I know what I'm doing so I don't feel like I look stupid. So actually having said that, to bring it back to the dance floor experience. It's reminded me of something else I wanted to talk about, this idea about making mistakes. I really feel like when I'm dancing on the dance floor, something that has been quite interesting - I'm doing some work at the moment doing some Odissi dance research with one of my dance colleagues, which is really exciting. She is also a lecturer at Kingston University in dance and we're kind of like dance colleagues... She's a dance anthropology lecturer.

She wrote her PhD about the kinaesthetic experience of Indian classical dance. *Kinaesthesia*, something about what's the physical experiences that arise in your body as you're dancing. You might find that really interesting.

So, making mistakes..?

One thing in the research that we've been doing, we're trying to develop ways of encouraging creativity in Odissi because as you know it's all totally choreographed so we're trying to figure out how we can develop some kind of improvisational language in the dancing. She kind of laughs at me, but sometimes she says Maryam when you get stuck or worried that you're going to make a mistake, you just freeze up and you stop. And I kind of thought that that's so interesting because it's like in this kind of totally different setting, in Odissi, where I feel the pressure for everything to be correct and have to be perfect - I'm definitely a lot more scared to try stuff and I'm worried about it looking stupid and I want it to make sense, and it's such a contrast to my trance experiences where I feel so confident and so at ease on the dance floor. A big part of that is because I know that there's no such thing

as making a mistake on the dance floor, and also it's a really interesting experience when I'm in the flow of dancing and everything is really going and then maybe all of a sudden I'll miss a beat or I'll kind of like slip or lose my balance for a second and instead being 'oh crap I lost it', I just kind of enjoy the experience of where's this going to take me now, where's this going to go.

Sort of exploratory or something.

Totally yes, it's like I missed that beat, I'm going to land here now, maybe this is going to take me somewhere different where I wouldn't be going otherwise.

Can you talk a bit more about when you say, when you're in the flow and everything's going...? What's that like? That's something that really interests me.

It's kind of this, it's definitely, really... It's like a balance between yourself and your creativity and also the music, so for me it's very much like I can't dance, I can't get a flow if I'm not feeling the music because that's a very key thing for me. I know that many people, even if they're not feeling it, they'll still get a groove going. If I'm not feeling it, I'll just stand there, I can't even bring myself to move. That's one really key element for me. I have to be feeling inspired and connected to the music and the music has its own flow so I guess for me if I try and describe the process as I get into it, for me usually first I'll actually be listening to the music before I even start dancing so maybe I'll bounce side to side a little bit and get into the vibe and just start listening to the music, and then I don't know. It's a very interesting process, which is why I love trance so much because it has the effect of really drawing you in, and somehow all of a sudden you feel compelled to start moving, to start dancing - so I like to wait for that to start to draw me in then...

What sort of thing in the music really takes you?

Interesting rhythmic patterns I really enjoy. Rhythmic pattern can make me go really [noise]. So that can be really interesting, I'm sure that you know what I mean when I say this, something that - really well placed - that makes you go 'oooh'. Only someone who's really into psy-trance will understand what that means.

A skin orgasm or something like that?

You read the [unintelligible] about the musical [unintelligible]²³, I kind of read that recently as well, so that kind of experience where it makes you go 'oooh' but it can also be a combination of things, how things fit together and also mentally to feel engaged, where you think 'that's really clever' or 'that's really interesting what they just did'

So you want to participate.

The things that don't work for me are things that make me go...I don't like it when things are too obvious so if it's like...there's a lot of trance that's almost too methodically building something up, where it'll be like either a very obvious pattern of building up frequencies or beats or.. [Makes obvious trance build up noises].

Too many build ups.

I know, yeah so that kind of thing I'm not really too inspired. If it feels too contrived. I'm not big fan so...

²³ Here I think we were referring to a Slate article that had circulated at the time about *musical frisson*, or *aesthetic chills*. Sometimes also referred to as *skin orgasm*.

Let's say there's two bits of music at a party, in one room you've got some quite fast driving experimental type stuff but it's fast and driving and bass heavy, and then in the other room you've got something a bit slower, the same experimental... and interesting to capture your mental interest, but it's a bit more bouncy and slow. Which one are you going to go to?

Nowadays I think maybe because I'm getting old I'll go to the slower one, and also just because I feel like, as a dancer, I find that when it's a little bit slower there's a little bit more space to experiment and be creating, so when it's really fast it depends on the artist as well, but if it's really fast sometimes there's not enough space in the...

Between beats, kind of thing?

Yeah, in the phrase... Sometimes the beats can be really fast but the phrases moving over the beats are really big and expansive, so that can be incredible but that doesn't happen too often, it takes quite a skilled artist to pull that off.

Just thinking about poi, that's kind of juggy and sort of playful, and sort of like a skill type thing, and it's also very repetitive and I know dancing is also a cyclical type thing - but perhaps Odissi is maybe another scale of things, which is very pre-practised and also its temple dance so you have the spiritual stuff. Maybe between those two somewhere, along that spectrum, is your dancing at a psy-trance party? What do you think?

With poi, you're working with key set of principles almost and you've got a lot of patterns that you can work through and obviously the more advanced you get the more possibilities open up to you but it's definitely quite repetitive but it's also very hypnotic almost, when you're really getting into it, so it's definitely creates that trance state.

I notice that you use the word trance over another description and that has a lot of ritual, spiritual connotations. Is it the same headspace that you're in, when you're doing poi and you're really into it and it's really hypnotic, as it is when you're on the psytrance dance floor, or is it different?

When I used to be really into poi... kind of similar to dancing on the trance floor, but a little bit different in the sense that you have to have that extra level of concentration to actually be able to do it. That's a little bit different, but why I left poi was because I started to feel too limited by it and so I started to feel like... In dance I can achieve more and I can feel even more connected and if I hold that same deep focussed state of mind in dance then actually infinitely more is possible. So that's why I left poi, but I guess what poi teaches you is how to stay really focussed and how to execute quite complex things and also understand the space around you. Poi is really important for that because you have to understand planes in space and you have to understand how to make the patterns fit into the space, because if it's going to look like anything you have to stick to certain rules. Often when people first start doing poi, to even just get the poi to spin around in the wall plane. Do you do poi?

I can do two moves. I can't switch between them. I'm really terrible with getting into a flow state.

Practise is the answer to everything.

I do remember doing the one simple overhand move where one's going, forward, one's going back. So the plane would be transecting half your body?

Yeah, so also like, if you imagine you have a wall either side of you, just having the poi on one side of you and having it drop, making sure it's going around vertically at an angle. Just

trying to achieve that when you're a beginner is actually really difficult. Kind of understanding how things fit into space and how to just execute things so that it all fits and looks like you actually create a pattern. That was really important for me and opened up a lot for me in terms of dance because it teaches you how to visualise the space around you.

Is Odissi the same kind of thing, you have to focus quite a lot to execute it properly, but you have more scope for...it's not so limited?

That's what made me go 'oh my god' because Odissi was like the next level. In terms of the concentration you need to hold the form and the footwork pattern and the hands and the eyes and all the extra movements and of course the expression on your face and the amount of concentration you need is beyond anything that I ever tried to do before so I think that's also why I got really addicted to it because it's so all encompassing, it takes every ounce of your brain to be able to execute it. I definitely found that I feel like when I'm on the dance floor I can bring in that kind of concentration from Odissi, that maybe I learnt in poi, that gave me a start, and also now that I have a lot more body awareness as well from dance because I feel like another one of the reasons I stopped the poi was that I felt limited by the movement. I felt like these are just some things that are on the end of my hands, and it's not really engaging the rest of my body in any way, and I felt like these balls that were flying around were separate from my body and I didn't like that. I wanted to have the complete body experience so that was one of the other reasons I stopped doing poi and got more into dance. I think hula hooping might be a little bit different if you've spoke to any hula hooping person because the hula hoop is constantly hooping the core part of your body so I think that hula hooping might be a bit more of a satisfying flow art.

Is it like the body feedback that you're getting, the immediate feedback?

I think that fact that you're using your actual core body, you're using your hips your using your chest, your body to move around, you're doing some stuff with your hands, but the base movement is coming from your core so I think that makes it quite powerful in terms of how you feel when you do it, it feels like quite a empowering art, a flow art. I felt like poi wasn't really... I couldn't really get that flow with poi anymore because I felt like there was much more possible and it wasn't giving it to me.

Had the challenge of it disappeared a bit? Do you think that maybe was a factor?

It was also I knew what... When you do poi there's like different levels that you move through so you've got the beginner steps, the more immediate steps, then you get to the more advanced stuff. Once you've done these steps then there's like this section of types of movements so I go to the end almost of like...okay so I can do flowers and this and that, okay so now the next thing that I need to be working on is like pendulums and things like that. I go to this point where I was like... I knew what I had to do, but with poi it's a case that you have to practise a lot to get the movements really good and I was like, actually I can't be bothered. I know what I have to do, I know what the next set of drills that I have to start working on, but actually I can't really be bothered to do it because I felt like it wouldn't be that satisfying for all the effort that it would take. No, that's alright, thanks! So what's why I left it as well, I felt like the amount of time and effort it would take to really take it to the next level was not worth it.

Two things have come up that I was thinking about while you were talking. Basically, what I'm looking at in my chapter is the difference in meaning between words that people use to describe this head state that they get into on the dance floor...When I hear the word trance I'm thinking of all the studies that have been done, and even guys writing about, some guys writing about psytrance as well, they're writing about it a sense of a liminal ritual and everything, a kind of transformation ritual or whatever. The other two words I'm looking at are flow which I think was said a couple

of times which is more from positive psychology I think it's called and so that basically talks about an optimum state, a satisfaction, it's not hugely intense euphoria but it's a satisfaction you get from balancing the satisfying autopilot of doing your repetitive cyclical movement with just the right amount of challenge, or difficulty, or risk to keep you following the carrot, and then the other work I'm looking at, which people use and they use these interchangeably, is groove and that's like.. I think about 70's dance floors, disco dance floors. It's got that connotation to me. It feels like more sensual or something like that. You've used trance quite a lot, does it have those connotations for you and what do you think of those other words, flow and groove?

I would guess that with trance, I think it is quite...because you talked about the tribal, what was it you mentioned?

The transformational ritual, kind of like an initiation kind of thing.

Yeah that was the one, I kind of feel psychedelic trance parties...it's like our generation's equivalent so I definitely feel like, not exactly the equivalent, slightly distorted weird equivalent, but it definitely feels like we're getting into that mind-set that we end up, that we're aiming for almost... We want that experience. Flow, yeah I definitely feel that was quite like a... That's kind of what flow is actually.

Basically that's how you described it, a lot of things that you said were about a balance between things.

Yeah, just enough to give you that carrot to keep you in there and fired and... So I think that's a good description for flow, that's quite a... and also with flow I feel a sense that all the possibilities, that loads of possibilities are there, but not like I've got so many choices that I don't know what to do. It's like all the best combinations keep on coming up. If I think of groove, I feel like it's something...I was trying to explain groove to Elena the other day, she's Italian and so we were working with a tabla player, a drummer, and he was trying to describe... 'sometimes some of the drum beats get groovy', and Elena was like 'what's groove'? And we were just like trying to explain groove and we're like 'uhhh it's like when it's kind of cool', but I feel like for me grooviness is something where it's got a little bit of flavour, a little bit of attitude. How do you describe groove? Oh my god.

Nobody ever says this anymore, but if you're 'getting into the groove' it's like getting into the groove on the record, or the groove of a track so you're kind of going along and you get pulled into a path, or urged along a particular way in a song.

It definitely draws you in, you kind of fall into it. It kind of turns you...I feel like, if I'm on the dance floor, if I'm in the trance state then things are going to be flowing. They kind of go together, I don't know if I could be in a trance and not be flowing.

So it's an element of that, like a process that goes on when you're in trance?

Yeah. It's kind of like almost you switch on and say ok let's get everything flowing.

You've been to foreign festivals, non-British ones. Is there like anything that you can pinpoint that different from your experience of being on the dance floor not in Britain, like a party in London, something that you would regularly go to?

I've been to two foreign...I went to Hadra festival in France many years ago, and I've been to Ozora in Hungary twice as well. The thing that I felt when I went to Hadra in France that I really noticed is that the men would not leave me alone and it was like...ruined the experience for me. I had been trying to dance and get into that feel and there'd constantly be a guy trying to hit on me. I was like 'oh my god', I was like wow...

Like I'm not doing this for you, I'm doing this move for me.

I suddenly really appreciated that would not happen in the UK. I thought is that like a cultural..? Is that like a French thing? Ozora, because it's a lot more international, so there I felt like the people that were there were the people that were dedicated to trance. So if you go to a UK festival, or a squat party or something, you'll get people there who are really into it, but you'll also get people that have just found this party, let's just go and have a good time.

So it's not like they're into that particular genre necessarily, it's just that they were looking for a squat party?

Exactly, whereas at Ozora, it's like all of the characters that I mentioned before, because you get like [unintelligible]... sorry to give you another categorising nightmare, but you get all of the characters almost there are archetypal trance type characters, probably another chapter.

So you get all the dedicated trance characters at international festivals?

I've felt like it was like almost a distilled trance experience, everyone was totally into it. A little bit different in terms of the dynamic, it was really hot for example, so that changes things because it's never hot in England. I think Noisily had lovely weather their whole festival, so lucky them, isn't it?

I didn't want to go anyway!

Me neither [laughs]. So I felt like people were really generally into the music, not just there for the drugs and things like that although that is of course an element that you can't ignore, I won't deny. I felt like it was...I feel like the London parties, the UK parties, they definitely have a grittier quality. Especially the London parties, they definitely have the grit to them, whereas Ozora for example, it has a little bit of grit, it's definitely there but it's also sunny and a bit fluffier and people are enjoying life and it's more of the lifestyle almost. I feel like the London scene in particular is grrrr. Very fiery, a bit dirtier. That's some of the difference that I've felt.

5. Adam (Ad) Simeon, 21.04.17 - DJ and Décor Artist

What I have been writing about is styles in psytrance and...you know what to expect from psytrance wherever you go to a festival - I've only been to 3 psy festivals and they were all in the UK, but so I hear.

What I like is that there's a style of music that kind of fits every time of the day and I think that's been engineered over the years by different producers. Like with morning trance or night-time trance - but it actually works you know? If you're in a hot country at a festival you don't want really banging fast music during the afternoon because it's too hot, so they have progressive playing and it's much more spacey and just a little bit calmer. Because especially across Europe it's so hot you can't do [fast beats sounds] all the time. At European festivals the difference between daytime and night-time is so much - like 30 BPM faster at night than it is during the day - it's ridiculous!

So like, how much is the space you create linked to the music that will be played and what influences you have like, by other visual artists? Or say you went to a festival and-

-and saw something, brought it back kind of thing...

Yeah.

I think music going to parties going to festivals is kind of about escape. It's about stepping out of your standard boundary - your 9-to-5 job you do - standing out, stepping out of that and I think the music influences a massive chunk of it but the décor creates the environment that you step out from that from. So I think maybe, less so with the trance scene but more other music genres, like with techno, the set would be much more black-and-white backdrops - a bit harsher.

So you do that as well? You do all different kinds of parties?

This is a bit off topic, but we do like Pablo's Disco-Bar which is a bit of a crazy - the idea is - so it's a night Carlito runs - it's supposed to be a cartel. So it's like the drugs cartels in Colombia, when you look at how they have the houses, they're really serious gangsters but the houses are like, flowery wallpaper, flowery curtains and their Fiesta, like Mexican and Colombian Fiesta, is like bunting and stuff and that and it's a completely different vibe. So within the trance scene it's generally trance décor. It's trance décor, whether it be stretch or...

...but why is it that the trance décor is like it is and not the other thing?

Because you're trying to create a psychedelic space, so it's something that is visual. That's why we use UV; it's so attractive to people in their heightened state of - because it stands out, because it's bold compared to the normal wash-down world.

So you were saying about the stretchy things, they are quite like - sometimes I think they are like sails and sometimes I've noticed how if you're indoors, like down the Volks where it's really rubbish and everything, it's almost sort of like using the stretchy things kind of like takes the corners out of the room...

...takes the edges off the room.

...is that what it's for?

Yes - when you go into...like, take the Volks right, it's a big square box and it's horrible right? So we blackout all the ceilings and walls so it takes away your edges. If you've got a grey ceiling you can see the ceiling, but if it's black the depth perception changes: it goes. So we black it all out and then you put stuff - then you kind of try and create, try to change the shape of the room in a way, with stretch.

That's so interesting - depth perception. So you get rid of the features first and then you add to on the top kind of thing?

Yes you give yourself a blank canvas. Every time they paint the Volks it's like "can you just paint everything black?!" it would save me hours work every time when I turn up there! Because otherwise, it's just some stretch in front of the walls and it ruins the illusion.

So it's an illusion?

The illusion is because you're trying to make people forget the room that they're in, you know? Because trance has always been about being outside, and that's been right from the start: it's about being in the woods, about being on the beach, being in a big open space where there are no walls, there is no boundary. So if you're in a room and it's quite obvious you're in a room that can affect that feeling of being outside. And you can't totally recreate that indoors, but you can take some of the walls away and that moment you're on the dancefloor you're not in that room, because you're surrounded by colour and when you look beyond the colour there's just black - it's like being outside with the sky I guess.

The other thing I was interested in knowing was about shapes in psytrance - about the stretch bits: they're often like, triangular or whatever?

I think it's down to how the material works because you're working with stretch - you're working on tension so three points is much easier to get tension with than four points for some reason. Because for - we always try and work on the symmetry, we try and do the left and right of the room to be the same - and the square is quite difficult with four points. It's like that shape here [shows example] so then you have a longer tail which can be pulled off [in one direction] here. You get two types of material: there's four-way stretch and two-way stretch. So four-way will go any which way, but two-way effectively only pulls one way so you get a different shape thing with that.

Where does that come from then? Because you've probably been going to parties for quite a while I suspect?

Yeah, quite a while!

So the style of the décor and stuff: how long has it been like it is or has it gradually got there?

In the late 80s/early 90s when it was really sort of getting going in Goa and the Israeli scene was kicking off, it was just a lot of UV. So you had like, bamboo parties and you know, bamboo was like, grew freely in Goa and other places and so it was a freely resourced thing and you can do quite a lot with it. So they used bamboo for the frame and then strung up stuff that was UV between that - backdrops - then it slowly evolved. I don't know whether stretch thing came in...because psychedelic trance culture's kind of supposed to be about - preservation of the planet is a big part of it but this is plastic - not an earth friendly material you know? There is definitely contradictions in trance.

Yeah, totally - think about the technologies as well.

...and the travelling around the world for the purposes of taking 10,000 people to a beautiful, remote location - takes quite a lot of...

...like, carbon footprint.

So you take all these people to a beautiful place and stamp the ground for five days! There's a lot of contradictions in the trance scene I've seen over the years.

So shapes in the music is something I've been thinking about as well. So in the music I think there are like, shapes - I mean like globular noises and there's - it sounds like maybe noises are being pulled apart...?

Yes, well people take acid and other psychedelic things at trance parties so that changes again your perception of what you're hearing and it makes things sound a bit drawn out and strange. So when you do a laughing gas balloon it has this weird sound effect to it that you hear, and then people are just trying to recreate that in the music. But with any music style that goes on for a long time, people are just generally copying each other and I think after a while the original concept of trying to recreate something really strange and trippy, because that reminds you of a drug night, I think that has become a little bit static and it's less about trying to recreate a personal feeling to "this is what everybody does".

More about musical influence?

Yeah, musical influence.

So in terms of light and décor then...?

Well, we try and create environments and we try and do different styles of environment, so when you go to psychedelic trance party we can decorate and make it look a bit Moroccan, but as long as you've always got something - it's like we use lights to catch something in your eye that gets your attention. So yes you've got this sculpted space, but you need

something to take your eye, take your mind, so twinkling lights or like the bubbles in the oil wheels that we use. You've got these oil wheels and there are like, three layers of glass and within the glass is different coloured oils, so obviously as they go over it changes the colour and some of them have little shards of glass in them, so when it goes round as the wheel's rotating as it sits in the holder the beam of light goes through it and goes through another lens and changes colour.

Is that like, laser lights?

No, it's old school 70s, it's like 70s oil based.

Sort of like in the 'happenings'?

Yes, old school 70s technology. So you have the light and as the wheels turn, the ones with bits of glass inside comes round like that and it drops as gravity takes hold, so you've got a moving thing. And the idea is as you project from the back of the room onto everything, it gets the people. So then suddenly everyone in the room becomes part of the décor. So we've gone to like a party - did one in Jack's Club like 10 years ago - and there was a girl wearing all white and she was dancing in the chill-out and she was totally in her space - and we just projected, just nudged the light over a little bit and just on her and she became this full psychedelic thing. And she was much better than any of the décor around her, she just wearing white and she was completely projected with the bubbles. In her own space, completely oblivious to what's going on and everyone in the room was sitting there really, just having a moment from the main room, just like "wow, look at that" because it was like it was something really to focus on: it was a moving thing and this person but she's moving and everything was moving on her - it was quite psychedelic.

Music's really immersive like that, with the volume as well, like, feeling it and you're in the music and with other people and you're feeling the vibe with other people: so would you say the visuals are kind of following that?

Yes, the environment can only enhance that, because it can only improve that experience - it's a virtual reality experience but it's reality.

Exactly, it is almost like a virtual reality.

It's a virtual reality, reality!

You almost like, step inside the music, the musical space and it's all very... there's loads of reverb and delay so it's - it's a big space and you almost have like a virtual body, because your body is all enhanced by various things -

...and so it all feels a bit weird and a bit strange

...so you can like go around space as - like, you kind of visualise the music sort of - so the little sounds become things going past you or around you. Do you know what I mean?

Yes - it's like when you put headphones on at home - with headphones on it's a completely different music experience than sitting at home with the stereo on, you know? You're immersed in it in a bigger way, so take that club and you play the music with the speakers loud enough it's as if like, you're with headphones on - you're in the same sort of space, aren't you?

A lot of the - 50% of what we do is main room with stretch and psychedelic trance, but the other half is the chill-out space, which is actually where we are from much more - we're much more interested in the chill-out space. I think the magic happens in the chill-out that doesn't happen on the dancefloor - a different magic happens. You have - in the chill-out at a

festival, for instance - people come to the chill-out for every different experience: they come and eat their breakfast and while they're sitting there eating their breakfast at 7 o'clock in the morning, there's a guy going absolutely crazy next to them, completely in a psychedelic headspace - and that all happens hand-in-hand and comfortably. You wouldn't have that in any other situation, sitting a train station at seven eating your breakfast and some guy was completely off his head and was starting to get in your space you'd be a bit freaked out, so you'd move, but at a trance thing you'd just look up and smile at the guy and carry on eating your breakfast absolutely fine.

It's like all the kind of mundane stuff is going on at the same time as all the stuff you find the main space.

That's what happens: people come there to dance, people come to get a cup of tea and have a spliff, just chat with friends. It's a much more involved - I think people are almost taking in more of the environment in the chill-out than in the main room, because you go in the main room, in there it's like [raaah!] they're just hands in the air and getting the energy out. But there's another energy that we need within the psychedelic scene which is the calmer, calming energy, which is a nicer space to be for some - a welcoming space to be in a way, for a lot of people. People go to trance parties that spend very little time - it's why people don't go to the Volks because there isn't a viable alternative space.

Exactly - it's only the smoking area and I spend so much time outside!

Yeah - why pay the tenner to get in, you might as well stand outside and have a fag! I think that's the problem with Brighton particularly, is there's no venue with a viable second room. The Concorde: been a few times and the bar can be an alright second space if you bring a better sound system and you lush it up, and you spend a lot of time making it - taking off the square of the room. It's like that Temple Movement thing that started up in town that I haven't been to - and it seems like they are really doing it, so I want to go. They're bringing in all the top people to play and it sounds like it's happening - Ian went the last one that Kaya Project was playing, and he said it was rocking and there was another generation of kids that was dancing to psy dub and they're really into it.

...you know you are talking about tempo and the time of day and things, yeah? It's almost like you've got different music for that, but it's like a sort of different trance that happens, because of that - if it's 120 BPM or above, you're getting towards a feeling of jogging along and your heart rate coming up a bit, but when you're in the chill-out tent you're still in that kind of hypnotic place, but it's more of a subdued, meditational type thing?

That's interesting. I've been creating chill-out line-ups for quite a long time and we do our chill-out spaces and you still have to structure it - I still have to look at every artist and think about what they play and structure it accordingly. So the chill-out can go from techno really, down to ambient with no beats at all, and you've got to try to factor that in and having a guy playing techno and then ambient - that doesn't work. But then at the same time, the chill-out room seems to be less... it seems to be slightly less important to people where the music goes: they tend to go with it. So I can go on after another guy and play a set - I think because of the way the crowd moves in the chill-out space - they go to the chill-out room for half-an-hour/an hour and then they leave and go back to the main room, so you have this constant flow of people that maybe you don't have in the same way on the main dancefloor. So it's kind of interesting; you might start playing knowing that you can lose quite a few people and they'll wander off, but three or four tracks later you've got another bunch of people coming and they're now enjoying the space because they haven't had that massive dynamic shift in sound, because they haven't been there for when this guy was playing to when this guy is playing - so it changes.

It's like a really in between space kind of thing, like liminal.

Yes, liminal. I worry less about playing the chill-out following anything than about playing trance - I think "what, this guy is playing 145 BPM but I can't come on 140, it's too slow!"

Do you really worry about that? Is that something that artists really worry about?

It's more I'm conscious of it. You want - the main floor between artists has to flow - less so in the chill-out, more so on the main floor - it has to flow. People are a bit more fussy on the dancefloor about where a set goes. They say "he can't play that at that time".

When you're doing décor things, if you're not the one doing the music, do you really sit down and talk to the people who are doing the music and the rest of the stuff and talk about this kind of thing and say "we need to you do this and I'll do that and this is what we're doing with the music" et cetera?

Not really. We try and look at the event and what we think is needed. So if it's a trance room, before a bunch of trance décor that will turn up and we'll put up, we look at the room and we figure out what we need. We usually have a conversation before about which style we'll use in the chill-out room then we think much more about the event and the environment and how that's gonna fit. If we're just going in to do the décor and we're not really involved with the music, then we look at the chill-out line up and see who is playing and what the vibe is gonna be - because we don't want to do something really floaty and lush when most of the DJs are playing techno. This is what happened when the smoking ban came in, as the chill-out rooms changed like that, overnight the vibe changed and it became another dancing space. Calling it chill-out - they stopped and all started calling it an alternative room and I noticed that happened almost on the button of them bringing in the smoking ban - which is really sad. But something like - it's such a switched on, connected crew - people smoking is the one thing that most of us do. I still smoke, but then we think that we're switched on, we live a life kind of "organic vegetables, man" and try to be healthy and try and be fit and then I'm like, smoking tobacco! It's weird, but that definitely had an impact on the psychedelic scene. Because you can go to the chill-out room and have a cuppa tea you see, we have cafes - what other parties can you buy a cuppa tea or other club night can you go by a cuppa tea or fruit juice at the bar - you can't! But I love the way it's evolved, I love that that's evolved as part of it too.

It's almost like, quite - I haven't been to any foreign festivals - but that seems quite a British thing to me?

I think it is. I think so - I think we love to you know, have a nice cuppa tea...We don't have the heat they have in Europe. In Europe it's much more about - I've seen the last few years - about healthy smoothies and all the buzzwords, but they're more important than getting a cup of tea. But then most of Europe doesn't drink proper tea anyway - that yellow label shit, that doesn't make a cup of tea! So I think it probably is a very British thing - it is a very British thing, I mean we even take mushrooms and try and mix the two - get magic mushrooms make a tea out of it and everyone else in Europe just eats the mushrooms!

Just thinking about the Moroccan influence thing you did, some downtempo stuff has got like more kind of ethnic samples in...

...yes, world music.

...so does that - has that got anything to do with why you might choose an ethnic influenced décor?

No it's more that we're trying to create a comfortable environment. The main floor isn't a comfortable environment - it's not really what it's meant to be, it's meant to be really heightened visuals and senses and music and all that enveloping - but the chill-out is more

about being in a comfortable environment, being in a comfortable space. If it's all getting a bit much on the dancefloor you need an alternative space to go to, a headspace, and you can still have twinkling things. I think it's the something quite hypnotic about Asian inspired/Eastern music - a lot of the instruments they use and the mantras - it's repetitive and it floats off and it doesn't fit to any particular... you think of musical scales and how music is written, a lot of Eastern music is really difficult to follow because they're so... intricate, you can't follow it like a 4/4 - it doesn't work the same way.

Kind of like Gamelan or something?

Yeah, it's amazing and I think it's just much harder to follow, so it almost makes it more psychedelic. You think of the old jazz stuff and the new jazz guys coming out there all taking psychedelics in the 30s, 40s, 50s and 60s and really going to town with it, floating off with the improv. - that's really psychedelic, because they're really tripping out....But the Moroccan set is more about comfort, it's more about cushions and textures and everything being low down towards the floor.

Literally taking the energy down from the dancefloor.

Yes.

So thinking about the main room, the dancefloor, does that differ depending on where in the world the party is, in your experience?

The decor in the main room is not that different in different countries - they all look back to Goa, that's what leads it. It's still stretchy fabrics or whatever but, if you will, the chill-out room is still a second thought to promoters, with people not looking at the line-up and budget restricted.

What things, in your experience, influence different scenes and give them their particular style or vibe, thinking about the parties you've been to in the UK and abroad?

Well...for example here, it's only recently we've had the late licensing, where before you had to go home and then you'd have a cuppa and talk to friends. So there's a culture around the after party here, which is about comfort. First and foremost it's about the community - that is very much from that hippie 60s era. Another example would be in Italy, nobody dances in the chill-out but in the British spaces they do. It's about climate as well, that we've had to stay indoors rather than being outside - we can have a nice hot chocolate which is very comforting. In Europe it would be too hot and you wouldn't have that comforting experience. It's like Italians: their espresso is a short, sharp hit of coffee rather than here where we like to savour a hot drink. But I think the biggest influence on music is the drugs and the people to what style is popular in the place. Different music scenes have different drugs and that changes the music people want to listen to. For instance the gypsy parties - it's all about drinking and then it's done by 2 AM, but with psytrance you take psychoactive drugs and so it lasts much longer. It's all about escapism stepping out of your norm, so the norm is different depending on where you are - for example, in aggressive, hard areas there will be different drugs and music that goes with those. And what drugs are popular in a scene changes as well - I've seen it cycle round in a couple of scenes, you know, like, ketamine is really popular for a while and then something else comes in like LSD and that's the thing everyone's doing. So that is going to affect what music is popular in a scene as well.

So I want to talk a bit about colours and shapes - so, can you tell me all the things that you have in your psychedelic 'toolkit' when you do décor for a party?

Well, people see rhythm in numbers and shapes, you know? You have geometric shapes going back to ancient civilisations - like the Egyptians - and you have patterns which are

significant and give people a feeling of knowing where they are. It's whatever symbols come from your forefathers and you find significant. I'm not really into all that; I'm a bit more practical, but people in the psytrance scene are into sacred geometry and things like that, so we like to think about our audience and we'll go with those kind of influences. So we use oil wheels, lights for that peripheral twinkling in the corner of your eye, strobes from hanging from the ceiling, stretchy materials...

...backdrops?

Backdrops: less so, or not so much nowadays. The stretch is very convenient because it packs down very small and so it's good for moving or travelling example if we need to get on a plane to do a festival in a different country, we can fit it in our luggage and it's really light. Backdrops are much heavier and don't store conveniently - they're pretty big and you usually roll them up. Nowadays I see people doing a lot of things with projection mapping: that's the new, exciting thing. You have like a big mask and then different things will be mapped on to make it like a moving face for example.

The mapping - it's a bit like that story you were telling me earlier with the girl wearing white and you were almost 'mapping' things onto her with the oil wheels, in a kind of lo-fi way?

Yes, it's sort of similar to that.

Do the clients get to choose what kind of theme they want?

So, we make different sets. We don't give organisers too much choice because it's our creativity at the end of day and we don't get paid much for it - it's for the love of it really so we may as well enjoy creative freedom. Once we had geometric shapes made from wood with lights inside for example, then you've got the bamboo set which is further old school Goa star parties etc. - so the client will choose a particular set from what we have.

So what colours do you most like to use in your sets?

Well to be honest, all the colours are very muted - there are no lairy colours in a Moroccan feel the materials and light and colours are muted and it's similar for the main dancefloor sets. It's not really about what colours of the actual fabric and so on that we are using - in fact the more muted better because we are projecting different stuff in different lights onto the material.

6. Robin Triskele, 26.06.17 - Marketing/PR Consultant,
Artist Manager, Stage Manager, DJ (current) and Booking
Agent (past)

Basically, just to start off with, if you could just tell me what you do in really simple terms.

OK, I have two sides to what I do, I run Triskele Management which is my Marketing/PR consulting agency and that's broken down into two parts, one would be the record label, artist and event PR where I do the marketing and help them get the word out about their release, be it on social media or magazines, arranging interviews, things like this, for them to use for their PR, and on the flip side I do event management, so I travel throughout the year to different countries and I kind of slot in where they want me to go so for instance in two weeks I'm going to be in Finland and I'm going to be the artist manager there. I DJ at all the festivals but I also work some of them, Psy-Fi, I'm the stage manager, some places I just do

logistics or book flights or whichever so I'm kind of a consultant/ Jill-of-all-trades I suppose, I can do anything having to do with any label or event these days.

So you do several different things there. So you do artist management for particular festival where you'll be there, and you're managing the artists that are there, and making sure that they are alright and their set goes on time and things like this?

Artist management is making sure that they are tended to, that their hotels are alright, that their transport's taken care of, basically everything involved in getting them from their home, then to the event and back without a glitch. Stage management is more of a way of making sure the stage is prepared for them be it a live act or DJ set, that they are there for their sets on time and have everything they need while playing... water etc.

You've got people that you manage and they are on your books, particular artists?

I don't do that any longer, I used to have a booking agency, and I did some bookings for Twisted, TIP. Maia, Organic and Nano Records, and all of this, at that point about seven or eight years ago all the artists I was managing were making two or three thousand a gig you know so that is worth being a manager. But it all changed for many years and fees dropped dramatically...unless they're Dickster, Tristan or some of the more long-standing well-known names ...they weren't barely making over a grand a gig. With so many artists out there and so many festivals with their pre-decided agenda of what style, or what artists they already want, that doesn't really make it as easy for booking managers to get the others gigs. Many artists were used to touring a lot and making decent money but when the fees dropped I found they were stressing on me as I was responsible for getting them more gigs and they started to make me feel their financial security was down to me getting them more gigs... and it just go to the point where my income was cut in quarter basically as I got 10-15% of the fees... it was just too much work for a hundred quid to manage an artist for just one gig so I turned that over to other people and went to the more background and started running things behind the scenes.

Why do you think that was? You said about seven years ago?

A lot had to do with the authorities, a lot of the European countries were having trouble getting permissions, and even more so new organizations popping up not following legal protocol to secure the event or getting the right permits made for a LOT of cancellations and crack downs on outdoor festivals... it seemed like in just 1-2 years we lost so many events due to reasons such as this.... like, for instance Indian Spirit, the SOL Festival, a lot of these festivals in Europe, something happened, or it just seemed like that summer I lost about £50,000 worth of bookings because of festivals being shut down even as late as the week before. So with all my artists losing several thousand per gig and having 3-4 gigs cancel within weeks, they couldn't replace the date with another event such short notice and everyone lost out financially... from organizers to artists to agents. Authorities just got too difficult to work with or tried to... The last of the legendary GLADE festivals, we ended up not agreeing to the security measures the police put forth because they wanted more police on site, as in so many that the presence of them would have made for attendees to feel uncomfortable and stifled. Along with that came extra 5 figures to pay and it's just not feasible, or in line with our ethics being a peaceful scene! and some festivals just aren't willing to negotiate that, you don't want to go to a festival where there's a policeman every two feet, and it just go to the point of that... and once that happened it really hit the scene deeply and artists lost money and the festival lost money, and within the next year you just saw wages drop completely for artists fees, it just became undoable I think the scene... the working of the scene just wasn't working anymore, just 'boom' - everything seemed to fall apart and I wasn't willing to rebuild upon that side of it, with the artist management any more. I mean with the booking agency anymore because you have all these festivals cancelling a week before and you've got ten artists going, and most of the time I've gotten deposits, but

even back then we weren't doing deposits as much, because it was everyone knows each other kind of thing and when it comes down to artists who were making a living by doing this and losing three gigs in a summer and not getting money because contract or not, if there's no money there to be had then there's no money to be had, and it seemed like the scene collapsed in a way, and a big change in the way it was run. Contracts weren't being honoured anymore as when a festival loses 100k a week before the event, the likelihood of them every being able to return deposits to artists was very slim. The money just wasn't there.

Wow, I had no idea that was the case. It sounds like...that's something that I've heard going on the UK quite a lot, for quite a while, festivals getting shut down just before and you know...

A handful a year, we had the Green Gathering, we had the Green Man, Sunrise; three within a month got shut down just days before the festival started. You had people travelling from other countries that had paid airfare and were coming to camp, then being stuck in a country having to find somewhere to stay or pay out of pocket for hotels, and you had artist that had already flown in, you had these contracts down and all of a sudden boom...hello, no festival. But of course we still had to pay their hotels and such. Back then there were more people willing to invest in big festivals as they were used to seeing the money come back but after a huge loss like that, they didn't invest anymore. Less investors means less festivals or hugely downscaling. That's been a big factor, I lived in the states before I moved to England over a decade ago and I threw parties there as well and it was exactly the same thing that happened there, the authorities just broke down too much and it got to where we had to close everything by two in the morning and this and that, you know? It's terrible that they've come in and done that but it's really shaped (more like ruined) the scene quite a lot.

Do you reckon..? Trying to find a positive in this!

I think it has a positive effect in the end in some ways...the one thing I noticed, because all of a sudden everyone was trying to throw a party, so many new crews popping up...especially many young people with a bit of cash and no experience wanting to do an event to be *cool* and not realising the hard work... or new folks who wanted to throw a festival just to make a buck (but with bad budgeting skills lol)and it got to a point where the proprietors were a bit shady and you never quite knew whether this new organisation was alright or not and it kind of washed out a lot of the riff raff because every old person was trying to do something, and it'll be their first event, and they'd be a huge line-up and they said they had the financial backing and then they wouldn't. So now that all of that has happened, people have been a bit more wary I think of all the smaller things and they're sticking with the big ones. So the positive is that it got rid of some of the less professional organizers and let people realise that it's really not so easy to just get together and throw a festival, so we couldn't have all the bad experiences, well not all, but a lot of the bad experience of that happening.

What about the non-commercial side of things like smaller parties and things because I noticed..?

More of those formed out of that for sure, yeah definitely. You started seeing a lot more nights put on, for instance in London I remember when we were trying to pick dates to throw an event for Synergy or Liquid or any of those back in the day, and you'd have to look five or six months out because there'd be three, four, five parties on a weekend. We don't get that now at all do we? And that came from, we can't do festival so we'll do a club night and all of a sudden there were loads and loads of promoters, which was good for diversity because you had Hi-Tek nights, Tech-House nights, you had more established UK psy trance nights with multi rooms (Club One!) hosting Hallucinogen, Lucas, Dickster, Tristan, Entheogenic, NickInterchill, and many of the Liquid Records/Liquid Connective family etc.... lot but it also

split the scene up to where nobody's going to make money if there's five parties a weekend. It was a very interesting time to see a lot of the parties pop out of that when all the festival's started getting cancelled, because all the people that would run a stage at a festival for instance, instead of being part of the festival experience they started doing nights like Illuminaughty or people like this, (who by the way are now one of the UK's largest and most established party outfits!), they started doing club nights in different cities. With the lack of available venues to use anymore most have gone to squats or using the same few venues. Then it was much easier to find a squat and get away with doing an event. Now the authorities are on it quick and not as negotiable.

Do you have any opinion about how that might affect what style is popular, because when you're outdoors there's certain things that people like to hear when they're outdoors, maybe if they're in a forest or whatever, and then... I've heard people say in the past 'this is too fast to be played indoors because it would just ricochet around all the walls and be too intense'. I wonder whether any of those things that are happening with law enforcement and so on and so forth, whether you noticed any change in the music?

I noticed after, that the people that did start doing events were the more serious people if that makes sense. You didn't see as much forest, Hi-Tek or dark trance in the clubs until quite recently and I think that is one that's too much inside of a dark closed space. There are some things that you do want to hear played out, like you've got a bit more tech, the alternative side room turning into techno and a bit more eclectic down tempo instead of the sit down and have a spliff chill/chai room. I think it did effect that tremendously depending on the area. Up north for instance they like their music a bit more banging, and a bit more crazy, and they throw in a bit of acid house, and whatever, they're a lot more... I just noticed as far as regionally within the UK certain parts of the UK have certain sounds as well.

Tell me more about that, I noticed that about the northern scene I wondered whether it was like Manchester and all the stuff that happened in the 90's the acid house and it's harking back to that a bit.

That's a thing with England isn't it though, it's so old and it's still got its connection to that acid house era and Spiral Tribe. I think up north, I've been up there to DJ a couple of times, and it seems like the crowd up north is a bit older than the London crowd so they're appealing to people's sense of reminiscence.

What about elsewhere in the UK, what kind of other styles. How are things like in the west?

There's a huge scene in the West Country. When I first moved to England that's where I first lived. In Bristol...they have the Tribe of Frog, Planet Shroom both of which have been going well over a decade. The music scene is very rich in that part of the country and still feels genuine!

I thought that was more like Wales.

No, they're Bristol. Wales has its own thing going on.... Mostly outdoor events and smaller-ish ones (under a few hundred, sometimes less). Some of my very favourite events have been in Wales!

What about further west?

The thing that about them that's really groovy, they still dress themselves up in fluoro outfits, faerie wings... and get all body painted/deco-ed out and stuff, you know what I mean, and they keep it really tight, they don't bring in lots of internationals so they're not trying to pull from other places, they've got their own scene that people come to every time. Tribe of Frog

sell-out every time and they just book locals. It's a solid family. That's a totally different scene, you go there and you feel like you've jumped back to the 90's with all the fluffiness and glow sticks. They have a working program that works as far as psytrance goes. I lived out in Kent for a while as well so going to the other side and it's more outdoor parties, and at least trying to be because they do a lot of the Omniscience and Liquid parties out there, and Liquid being kind of an institution, that's where it grew from, and you have the Canterbury lot which is basically the birthplace of psychedelic rock with Gong and Steve Hillage, Syd Arthur and more. You see another difference out there and they pull in a little bit of, not really rock bands, but psy-rock bands, things like this and it kind of keeps it a bit more raw I think and more back to basics natural vibe. Brighton only does a few things that I know about, they do the Volks club and stuff, they don't have a club big enough to do huge parties any more.

Not really, we've got the Concorde but it's...

Is the Concorde still going?

Yeah the Concorde's still going.

They don't use it for parties anymore, not for psytrance.

It's not really the right kind of venue for it, and the Volks is really shit. It's like being in a tiny squat party or something.

The sound is shit and it's a little dingy place for sure... but the situation sat on the espy and being able to stand outside by the sea listening to tunes is a bonus.

They're doing something at the Komedia now, which I haven't been to yet but it's more down tempo stuff. Temple Movement I think they're called.

There just doesn't seem to be a whole lot happening in the past couple of years, things have dramatically dropped down. You're not getting the Liquid parties as much, or Synergy project, you're not getting Acid Monkey any more, Elixir's fading out and dying, Alchemy parties are not happening. People can't make money doing it anymore. Sadly.

Have you been to lots of festivals around the world and things, and have you worked at lots of festivals around the world as well?

Yeah and I've organised quite a few as well. I've done quite a lot on that side, I've been doing events for about twenty something years now and up to now I've been both working and DJing in coming up to 20 countries! It's cool to see the differences in the dance-floors, the vibe and the way the organizations run their events. Sometimes it's a great thing as I learn new ways to manage situations, but more times than not it's a bit of a nightmare as some are just still not operating in a professional manner, still the mates agreements, no contracts, nothing set in stone.... So the last day things can be hectic if it's not been planned out properly.

If you had to characterise what's it's like here in the UK compared to anywhere else you can think of as an example, any differences, or unusual things, what do you reckon?

I think that the UK has a bit of an older crowd because if you think about the European festivals there's a lot of people travelling, I say many more young adults getting to travel a month thru a festival circuit or during their gap year between school and work/uni, I'm forty-eight now so for me people in their twenties travelling around are still kind of kids.

They're blatantly kids.

To be fair, many of them, other than trust fund kiddoes... they're travelling about volunteering to get their entry ticket, and travel with handmade things to throw down on a

blanket and selling little things on the side, jewellery a bit or whatever. The UK has quite a bit of an older scene, and an older crowd. I don't really go to the squat parties so I don't know what those are like to be fair. Everyone that I know that's doing them and go are old, thirty and up mostly, obviously I have loads of friends that are in their twenties as well but I just find the UK to be much older, I also find them to be a lot more responsible munters. Or shall we say seasoned professionals, haha!

Really? I wouldn't expect you to say that.

When I say responsible I guess it's the older lot I'm talking about, they can definitely be as munted as the next person but somehow seem to hold it together better if that makes sense.

Is it the stiff upper lip?

Probably so. I mustn't be seen to be out of my gourd no matter (I pretty much never do anyhow, but defo not in public!) Keeping up appearances and all that!...I think for me, telling the difference between the UK and other countries as well, the UK I still consider more smaller parties and not as many festivals going on so when I'm in another country...

There's not as many festivals?

They've really slimmed down, I mean we do have quite a few going on but when I go to another country I only experience the festival side of the scene, not the club side of the scene so it's hard for me to really say the difference. Festival wise it seems like a bit of an older crowd and I think - aside from Noisily, which has really good headliners and line-ups because they have money to put into it. I think the UK keeps it a bit more simple and there's a DJ everywhere you throw a rock and so many people that will play for free. So the events stay small. I don't get many gigs in England because I refuse to play it for free, I've been DJ-ing on and off for 20 years so it seems to be the same line-up, the same little family of people and the same of the same. I found that to be in England, a lot different than the other countries. Plus it seems to me a lot of the English don't like to travel to go party, the Europeans move about a lot!

Because we have quite a lot of festivals, just like pop music festivals over here.

I haven't been to any of those, I am pretty strictly in the more underground electronica scene. But if you are considering the pop festivals, the UK does indeed have LOADS! I can only speak for the scene in which I am tied to and enjoy the music.

The bigger festivals like that are hitting all your mainstream aren't they, so they're hitting mainstream bands, mainstream techno, the mainstream this and things that aren't underground whatsoever. It's so rare that you get a line-up that you see that you actually recognise, someone that's underground on any of the big festival circuit. On top of that they are terribly expensive. Entry, drinks, food, party highs etc. can easily cost a single person £500 plus for one weekend. Jeez, I can go to another country for 2 weeks for that!

I was thinking climate, it's not really that conducive to being outside?

It's always a toss-up, you never know if there's going to be rain. Even, for instance at Chrysalid we had rain, it wasn't in the forecast but we had rain and it got really chilly in the night and it was the middle of June, and I don't think the UK gets anywhere near as many travellers as other countries either. Because other countries that throw festivals, I don't think are counting as much on their country to pull visitors as they're counting on internationals, so it's a bit more like really tight-based as well. I know from working and being at Noisily there's some internationals, but not quite as much, you would expect quite a bit more so I think that's it a bit more self-contained in a way, being such a small country - because EasyJet, Ryanair, any of these, you can get back and forth for £50. Anyone I've worked with at festivals were always a bit perplexed that we don't get so many internationals, the UK is not

on that list of places that you want to go, if you want to go to a festival people are going to think of Hungary, or Spain, they're not thinking of England.

In terms of overall sound, is there a sound, if you're not from England, say from the perspective of someone not from England would you...

There's the UK sound? I suppose overall maybe so considering all styles of music. But in the UK underground psytrance/techno scene there is surely a *sound*. This is me not growing up here and only being here for 13 years, but there is defo something consistent about it.

Yeah.

I think when people think of the psy-trance scene in England people think of TIP and Twisted, they think of Shpongle, Dick Trevor, Lucas, Tristan, Laughing Buddha and all of this and to me that's a bit more adult trance, does that make sense? A different kind of psychedelic, there's not a huge Hi-Tek scene here (very hard music and fast beats, more close to hardcore than what I'm used to calling psytrance), there's not this, not that, but it's very kind of standard. I can only call it adult music, I don't what else to call it, it's very mature, the producers, the music is a lot more polished and nice and pleasing to the wider variety. The artists I mean using the term *adult* are all experienced for decades... not trying to be the new kid on the block and make it so fast and immediate gratification for the young lot who aren't appreciative of what *good quality* music is. Nothing to do with the style they like, but as long as it's well produced and clever!) If you go to Macedonia you're going to get 200BPM music all the time, almost any party, they wouldn't have any techno, even Boom a few years back had people with signs saying 'fuck techno, we want psytrance'. I think it's really diverse but as far as the psytrance itself it's... I don't really know how to explain the music difference other than it being just a bit more, maybe more accessible and middle of the road, the psytrance scene, if that makes sense.

Sort of high production values? You say it's very polished.

I think so yeah, I think the music that's hitting the masses, that people know about is of that calibre, like Nano Records, Alchemy, Liquid, Twisted, TIP... the pioneers of the scene who started it all... all of this lot. They've been making music all together for 20 years so it's obviously going to be tight. It's not just the music but the people themselves are really friendly and really accessible and will come out of the dance floor and dance with people and just be themselves, be real, not nose in the air, it's not like they come and play their gig and fuck off back to the hotel.

Do you find that elsewhere then, like there's rock star DJ's and things?

Yeah, there's a handful of them but some of them do 2-3 gigs a weekend, they play, they get on the flight and go to the next one. I don't see how they survive it. I'm, 46 and I have trouble doing a different country each weekend, much less two or three in a weekend. There's no way. But some are doing it for savings and going hard while they can. Many of the psytrance producers are trust funded, a couple property developers, and are doing this on the side for a bit of fun. Most UK lads aren't divas, but I meet my fair share managing stages and artists. We are ALL equal and all have played a part in how the scene is layered, who is big and not... and to be fair a lot of it in our scene (which is not to say the same for the mainstream) stays humble and people are all friends and connected.

...when you were a booking manager, to what extent do you think a booking manager having a particular selection of people on their books or a label curating a particular selection of artists - how much does that influence trends and sounds do you reckon?

I think it depends, it went through a phase with quite a handful of agencies and then there was just me and another, and then there weren't quite a handful, the artists took it back into

their own hands, and now there's a couple of good agencies together and a lot of the artists now are having people work with agents - which is good, it made the scene a bit more professional. But the thing that I always try to do, when I had my booking agency, was have a handful of people from different styles and not just all psytrance. For instance, FM Booking in Israel that I worked with really closely, they do all the Nano artists and stuff like this, but they've also got all the glitch-hoppy style and a bit of this, and a bit of that. So I think with that agency it can be a bit more wide ranged or when it can host a group of different styles. If they can get a festival to come to them and book ten different artists of ten different styles then they're going to have a bit more influence on that line-up, and what music is presented. For a while, with me, I had in the beginning just psytrance and they were all very similar and I wouldn't say that necessarily influences a crowd. Nor the crowd influences the style as much. I think it has to be a bit more about diversity to be fair because you're basically trying to book twenty artists that sound similar, who's going to choose from that? Like with FM Booking & Terraform they're trying to also create a different sound on their chill-out stages and that happening because of the different styles and putting in a couple of new artists.

So maybe stylistic things seep in from related genres?

Right now there's quite a lot of music that's being made that's crossover so it could be almost pulled off as techno. This is what I DJ, I DJd at techno party that is just techno, no psytrance at all. I've DJd at a psy-trance parties, I've DJd at chill-out parties and it depends on many things... there used to not be as much experimentation, artists weren't able to get away with different, or break from the norm, and now that there's much more music that's crossover, that can hit two or three different scenes, of different stages, then you're seeing the sound change a bit. I said earlier about the chill room - that used to be just chill-out, whereas now chill rooms aren't strictly chill rooms any more, they're alternative stage. In four of five years I've seen that shift completely, very rarely do you go somewhere and it's just chill-out, and that's because we've started getting these artists making things a bit more experimental and somehow it's started taking off. People were bored and you have to provide them with something different when they're bored. That's an example of how that has changed as far as making sure of getting different music in there.

When you were a booking agent, was it all UK based artists that you worked with, or..?

No, it was international.

From your experience with record labels and other booking agents, and people that you've come across in the industry, is that kinds of similar, that they have wide range of people, artists from all over the world on their books or do they stick with those from their particular area of the world?

All of the booking agencies now have all over the world. A record label tends to try to choose label DJ's around the globe, or artists around the globe as well so they get wider representation so it's almost like it's opposite, that the artists are the ones that are putting the label name into that new country so labels would pick a DJ in Spain so they could have Nano Records in Spain kind of thing so it almost works in a backwards kind of way. The labels go out there to look for the internationals to make that change in the scene a bit, to get their name here and there. Not a lot of records labels do as they are meant to be doing as far as getting their artists gigs or stuff anymore, there's not a lot of labels that are really out there putting their effort into that which is something that I've seen change in the last handful of years as well. Because originally when you got signed to a label they should be getting you gigs, you would think, but labels - they don't really have money any more, things are changing to digital, there's no money in making CD's and a lot of time labels are run with one person running it and they get volunteers in to do things. People don't have a strong work ethos when they're volunteering, and I see this a lot in the festivals as well.

7. Jake, Sept. 2017 - Speaker and Author

Tell me about your experience going to parties over the years and how it has changed.

In terms of how things have changed -let's say - I started going to parties summer 2004 and that was first of all going to festivals and then it was like free parties in Canterbury and stuff. And - as far as I was aware at the time and the things I was involved with at the time - after that it was either going to be London squat parties in the winter months or Canterbury outdoor parties in the summer months. The Canterbury stuff was people like I knew that were friends or people that I came to know more about and they were always people who had grown up round about that scene, who either lived in Kent or round about and had been going to the same things themselves then getting themselves together to start making music and DJing, putting on parties or whatever.

Were you taking over from previous...? I remember at the time talking to people like F. and they were saying there was a bit of a hiatus in Kent because of the new Rave Squad and maybe younger crews picked it up after?

There's a lot of talk about this crackdown. I guess the crews at the beginning were some guys called Alternate Perception and it was basically a bunch of friends still they were still very young 18, 19, 20 or something like that and I guess they'd been going to parties for a while and then thought like "let's start making our own" sort of thing - like Liquid connective crew they were doing parties all around Kent, Sussex and Surrey. I guess they had been going to parties for a while and then switched to doing their own thing. You had Section 63²⁴, as far as I know, the Kent-based crew and Organised Kaos - did you ever get the parties?

No.

So yeah, these were like forest parties out in Kent and I think you are talking about maybe like three or four years later, there was one summer when there was a big crackdown, lots of sound systems and people just got a little bit scared or things were shut down for a while in the Kent scene. Because it used to be just tons of people would just drive from - I guess lots of them would come from London and the Home Counties to Kent every weekend and there would be something going on. So you get this crackdown - oh also Omniscience as well, I guess were Kent based and Viva La Weaver - I think this was a crew made up of friends from various other Brighton/Kent crews) who were semi-related to them did sort of stuff - so there was maybe one summer when it got curtailed maybe earlier in the season, then after that... I guess F., who I met at a party at NY eve, and he and Fl....so they kind of like were bright-eyed young 17 olds and they got so obsessed, as many people do when they encounter this subculture and whatever and they would just... I remember this party distinctly in 2005, it was just in the woods I think it was Section 63, there were about 3 or 4 or 5 sound systems, it was going quite well, it was big and a couple of thousand people and I remember in the morning these dudes in white vans turned up in the morning and started selling drinks and burger vans came!

Haha - burger vans!

Yeah, they hear about something going on and turn up to make a quick buck or whatever. And then the police came about 8 o'clock in the morning and sort of like started shutting down the sound systems are there was one at the top of the hill we were at and you could

²⁴ Section 63 – named after the part of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994 giving police powers in relation to raves - <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2008/4/section/63>

see the others being shut down and all the people from that sound system come up to the next one and then slowly - like it would take them an hour between each one to shut them down so you just sort of like had to navigate with the crowds.

And was that intentional? [The placement of the sound systems/the police tactic of starting at the top]

No, I mean I think they just started at the bottom because that's where they came in and they came across a sound system and like had to try and organise the crowd and organise DJs and organise to generally shut it down and then go onto the next one. So we were like standing on top of the dancing and just seeing all this shit getting shut down and said we just can keep going for as long as we can, that's really good - it was like one which you get all the people from down there to come up and it will last a bit longer. So I remember distinctly there was - what was it called - you must remember this, there was this geo-dome²⁵ thing that some guys had with different kinds of instruments in and people could jam a whatever?

No.

But F. and Fl. would run around just like so eager to please the grandfathers of the scene or whatever, you know the people or organisers they saw as being people in positions of power, like proper grown-ups and they'd just be like "Yeah, let's collect rubbish, let's do this stuff!" like, really wired running around doing everything they would tell them to do and stuff. Rather than actually even enjoy the party they would be trying to do stuff and from very early on F wanted to be involved somehow, whether that was picking up rubbish to make the place tidy so it was nice whatever, or it was DJing and making music and the parties itself. So yes, I guess there was a bit of a shift between 2008-9 around then, 2007 as well, where there were a few parties in Kent and a lot more stuff in London, all in clubs as well I guess because back then we had - did you get to seOne?²⁶

Yes, what's the big party that was there?

Synergy Project obviously was always on there - and there's that one in Brighton now where stuff seems to be going really well. Then you'd always get away with quite a lot at Jacks Club near London Bridge and they keep going all night until the morning, which is quite rare here. I guess there was probably a shift around that sort time towards more stuff going on in London and the sort of older crews (Liquid and Omniscience - whatever may be considered to be old) and they'd been doing it for too long or something with whatever hundreds of people, these big, big outdoor parties. I think whilst the change at the time - I think it is relevant, perhaps - but the first three Glades 2004-5 were when mushrooms were still legal so like, the first two years every party whether it was a club or not would have mushrooms going around with everyone and that's what changed after 2005 as I saw it. I moved away from Kent as well and so that would possibly be an explanation or reason I was going to fewer Kent parties.

I'd also say that once I'd been partying for about 3 years I kind of had a greater awareness of particular artists, rather than just going to parties playing psytrance and being like "I recognise the name" I started like actually picking out names and stars and whatever. In 2007 I went to my first international overseas psytrance Festival which was Ozora it's like there's a menu, you have access to all these other names, all these other different types and

²⁵ Geo-dome – homemade geodesic dome that was easy to set up a large space. ID Spiral had one at several Glade and Glastonbury festivals too. See https://c1.staticflickr.com/1/57/198031297_5a6eac5466_b.jpg

²⁶ seOne: claimed to be London's largest licensed nightclub with a capacity of 3,000 people. Before that I think it was a legendary squat called The Drome.

styles - there's a whole range of styles that you get. A big festival like that is playing 24 hours for like, seven days or whatever. So you become a bit more discerning and you don't just go to a party for the sake of it being a party, you go to choose a party where there is a particular artist that you're more interested in. I think that a lot of the Kent parties had always just been run by my mates and they'd play for free - and it is the people that make a party, it doesn't really matter, it's the people that come to a thing - but maybe in the summertime it was the beginning of a shift where people would think more about the sort of party they put on.

So like more consumer choice - more going towards the industry in terms of like, particular artists?

Yeah I mean, I think this is probably mainly myself like at the stage I was so... I was just being more aware of a shift than it necessarily being a shift in general, yeah, but there would obviously be different types of strata or layers of parties that people go to. Ones at the time I probably heard like all these local DJs and is it more interesting going to see some guy from a label who's shit or some person who has ever played in the UK before and maybe you listen to at home and think they are awesome and "I really want to see this guy live". So I'm not sure whether there were more parties that were catering to that sort of demographic or whether it was just me noticing it more.

But then you also said there was a particular time when there started to be fewer parties in Kent and more towards London - do you think that maybe it kind of goes along with what you're saying, like maybe in London it's more central, you get bigger names or something, or it's a club?

Possibly, yes. So I guess if it's in a club or if it's in squat even you probably have a little bit more opportunity for making money because you can sell drinks, you can sell balloons, that sort of thing. It's more centralised if it's a bar and whatever and you can probably charge a little bit more - because you can always sneak into a forest party without paying a fiver so maybe prices also started going up around the sort time. It started, like it used to be a party cost a fiver, if you charge more than a fiver then people start going to other parties for a fiver, then you start paying a tenner for a party which for some people is quite a lot of money, right? But then it used to be because you know, you got a big name like, you have an international artist flying in from somewhere else, then it's worth paying the extra money to see something a bit more exciting. Yeah, I don't know, it was around I would say 2009 - 2010 where they used to be these London crews who were quite often not people who been involved in the Kent scene and maybe new arrivals in London and whatever and there was always this small amount of debate about how much they understood the prevailing factors about how you deal with police and how don't burn bridges and how you deal with stuff. And also there were a lot of accusations at the time that new promoters were doing it more for the money then for the love of it - I would say a lot of that is jealousy inter-promoter rivalry sort of stuff. And the promoters were also doing stuff that clearly people wanted them to do - you want see more and just the same DJs every single week was a bit crap, in any old warehouse. They put on bigger productions, getting bigger names and partying for longer and yes, they were charging at same time, I never really begrudged them massively for that.

And I don't know why the old school promoters like stopped doing parties, whether there was like legal issues, like fear of the laws and stuff or whether they were getting old or had families, or like life shit getting in the way, or combination of all these things. There was shit chatted on the Psyforum, who I think had more of the old school people as well respected members or whatever and there was always a little bit of backlash against this, but at same time I just remember thinking like, 2009-10 like "this is fucking amazing, these guys are bringing over this artist that I've always wanted to hear and I've listened to for ages and nobody was really interested in like, taking the risk of paying for the flight and getting them over and just doing something a bit new!". And yeah, I thought that was really fucking cool

because it was the same mates in the same field all weekend, and so I think between like 2010 to 2012 there was quite a lot of innovation, there was people putting on quite high production parties with a lot of good people and stuff and there was competition as well between them, I guess. It's a good thing that there will be competition to make the biggest names and have the cool stuff, maybe?

Something you were on about as well, there was also the shift between standard full-on which had been quite normal, to what at the time I called darkpsy but I guess now we call probably forest, and like Wild Things records were doing other things and Bom Shanka as well and you got like these national labels doing stuff like [inaudible].

So ok, Bom Shanka and Wildthings stuff was what at the time that you called darkpsy?

Yeah, I guess they did is sort of like the British angle on the stuff that was going on maybe in Denmark and Scandinavia and Germany and I'm sure these guys were listening to this sort of stuff like 10 years before I was even listening to psytrance and being inspired by it and saying we want to make more of this sort of music rather than the same sort of like Nano/Liquid stuff have been playing. We never really had Suomi sound in the UK - I think

the Wild Things records DJs produced and the Bom Shanka guys were sort of melding, I guess this full-on roots of what I remember listening to in the forests in Kent or whatever, with other artists. Like other records doing that were doing stuff, like Sanaton Records - a Scandi label - like Derango, Procs, Whrikk, that sort of stuff, who were probably doing stuff before I knew anything any about it.

How did they 'British' it then?

Just a melding of what they knew... Not sure if this is true at all, this is my interpretation as a 21-year-old sort of thinking a little bit about music or whatever.

Of course yeah, absolutely - that's what I'm after, your interpretation.

You know Jason at all... what were their parties called..? Chrysalid.

Some people have said British style is kind of like - if you want to like say one thing then British style is sort of like London sound. That's very middle-of-the-road mainstream but quite full-on, you know - it's not kind of happy-clappy full on like Israeli full-on, it's strident and that kind of thing.

I honestly wouldn't know what the London style is - is it like typical Psymmetrix, is that it?

Yes exactly - that is what people have suggested to me, though I haven't listened to enough to really to discern these things well, I sort of go on what the BPM is and where it is on Beatport or whatever.

I mean, I would have said that London style around this era would have been sort of like Psymmetrix and Carlos Santan as well, that sort of stuff but the main... I don't know, I don't think is accurate to say this is like a British or English style necessarily, but at the same time it was also like the same middle-of-the-road mainstream whatever, but it's the sort of like Briticised take on these other artists I guess. I mean the main thing was in general the global world scene shifting at the time, because it had been sort of like a lot of full-on - at least my English experience coloured view of it involved seeing shit a long time and now there was something new and exciting, which a lot of people didn't like and many people did like.

A lot of the old guard were like "I don't get this like fat bass line, heavy beat stuff" because going back to Goa and things, it's a bit more melodic.

And there was like infinite debates about how the music should be changing through the course of the night to reflect the whatever, so then we kind of like came to this nice little ceasefire: we could have dark or fast or heavy stuff between 1 AM and 4 AM and then when the sun started to come up the beat sort of started to slowdown make it more melodic, more progressive or whatever.

All that's what Goa Gil from ages ago promoted - the idea of ritual where you go through symbolised death and then rise again in the morning, so it goes from dark and you go through...

This also reflects how a trip works as well, which is why it happens so you kind of like have these more difficult times, perhaps it's dark and things are creepy and its bit weird and you can't find a friend or whatever, and then the sun comes up and you start seeing everyone's faces...

And it would be a bit of an afterglow, it's not so intense...

...and you kind of survived it, right?

You've been through sort of an initiation...

...and that sort of reflected in the music - mean a lot of this is just people's different tastes or whatever. Has anyone talked about how a lot of metalheads have come over into the trance scene?

Yes, in another interview we had that very conversation - I'm a metal head myself and started going to free parties around here and there weren't any that played metal, so we had to go to the ones playing psytrance and it became an acceptable non-metal music to listen to.

It's funny how there is this fluffy peace and love thing which is probably not the coolest place for metalheads to go and hang out with, but somehow this there is some overlap.

There is, but like I did find that the metal scene was very misogynistic. (I talk about my previous research project interviews responses.)

That's one of the most interesting things about the psytrance scene is fairly balanced like gender-wise.

You think? Not in terms of artists though?

Not in terms of artists, in terms of crowds - yes, a fair point.

You said you were writing a book?

A chapter of a book - I finished last summer.

What was that about then?

The legal regulation of plant psychedelics in UK and Europe.

That's really cool because one of my chapters goes into UK law and how might have impacted on where parties take place and under what circumstances and how that changes how people compose music and who they hang out with and who they write right with - that kind of thing.

I mean obviously we've got this kind of heritage like the rave scene and we probably have more restrictive laws anyone else and, even now with everything really fucked up, one of the best squat scenes in Europe.

Really, you reckon?

I think so, I mean like you go to Berlin and you don't have a squat scene so much because the parties go on in legalised, licensed venues - and they have an open-air scene as well, although I don't know as much about the open-air scene, but they have an open-air scene - I don't think it goes underground though. Not to just talk about psytrance, but many electronic dance music scenes have probably more illegal parties going on at the weekends then we do, in like Paris or Madrid or whatever so...

What do you think about the atmosphere of parties that you've been to in the UK compared to other places you've been? Is there a difference or are there sort of certain things which you might find at a UK party that you might not find elsewhere?

No, I don't think so. I haven't been to - maybe haven't been to an unlicensed party in another country, I've always been to kind of like the festivals or the parties that somehow are organised correctly or whatever, but I think that's the most interesting thing about the trance scene is the there's this homogeneity because it's such an international scene that if you go to a party in London it will still be like 80% people who weren't born in the UK. So it's the same shit wherever you go you go to a party in Slovakia or Germany or Italy or Greece or Portugal or Mexico - whatever - there's this common sort of undercurrent.

And like, the aesthetic is kind of similar as well - the decorations and dancefloor and stuff like that?

For sure - and stuff travels quite quickly as well. There is definitely a lag say going from the UK to Mexico or like even the UK to Germany or Norway or something like this, because everything just travels so quickly in the Internet age. Everyone listens to the same music, the same artists - especially if you're a DJ, you don't have to do... you just download the tunes you play to your mates.

...the strongest statement about Britishness or whatever at parties [of the people I interviewed] was how you can go to a party over here and I can often get a cup of tea and a slice of cake and things like this...but that the music on the main dancefloor is pretty much the same... the décor is kind of like the same - they have a selection of different sets that they take to use which the party organisers choose from and everything... it's the periphery of that, the chill-out tent chill-out rooms, that are a bit more somewhere where people hang out and maybe they actually dance in the chill-out tent more than at other places.

I don't find that at all, no, definitely not.

What would you say then?

It depends, because I think it probably goes more like family style gatherings in the UK, because it's people you know and whatever and you got connections so you might have I suppose, the Chai room, where those people with just made home-made cakes to sell or whatever. You probably go to Norway and get some guys selling pickled herring or whatever - and I think people dance in the chill floor, it's actually the same no matter where you are. I don't think that's UK specific at all.

And I guess it's difficult to tell, because if you are really embedded in another country's scene then you would know, you would have those family connections there and maybe at that level, it's the same?

Because like maybe they don't sell tea and cake, but they sell like acai and energy balls. I don't think it's - I don't think there are massive differences between the two, like I say it's quite homogenous. What I will say is that the smoking ban made quite a big difference here - that was huge.

Yeah, there is an argument to be made that smoking ban encouraged - there was a bit of a peak in squats around 2007, around that time, 2007-2008 there was a bit of a peak in squat parties because you could smoke there, but also there are a few observations - it was always really interesting in clubs before the smoking ban, because I think the chill-out zone was a lot more the thing in the UK a few years ago rather than now you mainly get one sound system, one rig at parties. And there used to be - maybe because the parties were small so it made sense to have two stages and there was a chill-out room and that always used to be quite important, that was an important thing for obvious reasons. And the chill-out zone used to have sort of like this camaraderie, because if you're in a licensed venue you're always trying to roll a spliff without the bouncers busting you and smoke the spliff, so it was always quite epic because you were a little bit wonky and you had to take all the steps to go through to make a spliff - which is difficult enough as it is, but when you also trying to pretend that you are not doing anything, bouncers are wandering around. I was used to going to give moral support to people and my friends used to come to give me moral support and "let's make the spliff together" or whatever and now you can't smoke indoors so you can't get away with having a spliff and dancing around - that has changed a lot.

What about late licensing? Because that came in, late licensing and weather were two other things that were mentioned to me because our weather is not that great and it's really changeable and also because we didn't have late licensing for quite a while.

When did that come in? That came in like 2004, kind of before I start going to parties.

But like before that people would be going to sit down after parties and there was that kind of chill-out vibe there and that was like quite a strong thing for people and that they felt like perhaps that had translated into - as late licensing came in - something about us or British people liking inside, cosy sit down gatherings, have a cup of tea type thing?

I think they're both relevant but I would be surprised if they were different - differentiating factors between Britain and other countries. I mean, I don't know, you go to Scandinavia they've got less light and more cold than we do..?

And they have that special word for cosy...? [Hygge]

Yeah, so they might have this thing, but I think it's the same shit - once summer comes out and you can go outdoors people go outdoors, when you can't go outdoors you go indoors and you do these more cosy, comfy, warm parties but I wouldn't say that we are unique at all - I'd be surprised if it is. The late licensing thing I don't know, because I've always - I've been partying 13 years and it has always been somewhere that's got a late licence or somewhere that can do an after party, so maybe someplace has opened till six or seven and someplace can open till late. There's Club Aquarium in Old Street, they always used to do after parties there. The place would open at 8 o'clock in the morning until 7 o'clock at night and everyone just used to sort of migrate across London on the tube in whatever state of mind and go there.

I don't know how people afford to do this. I would go to more things but it is this really expensive - it's the time and the money. I don't drive so sort of like [inaudible] and the taxi at the end of it, then you got your supplies anything else and then festivals, they go up every year and everything, but there are people who like go "I'm doing all the festivals this summer"!

Well, British festivals are ridiculously expensive to start with - I think they are segregated from the whole European festival circuit and it's a lot easier to make money on the European festival circuit if you're either selling stuff you bought cheap in India, selling shit you've made like jewellery or whatever, or selling just drugs - whatever, it's quite easy to go around and make enough money to support yourself for the festival circuit.

So when you said like segregated from ...?

Nobody European come to British festival - just because it just doesn't make sense in terms of money. Well, geographically it doesn't make sense, the festivals are a lot shitter it's just a lot shitter - we've got, as you know, we've got sound control stuff, we've got licensing stuff that means even in the arts you could stop music at some time - and we have a three-day party maximum.

Do we really?

Name me a festival in the UK that's been more than three days.

I just thought that was like because the weather was shitter?

No, not at all. I guess it's licensing and just the way things are. You go to Europe and for the last 20 years they've been having week-long parties - I think that you know, the sort of gold standard of psytrance parties has been made in Hungary and in Portugal.

Absolutely and Hungary and Portugal are two countries that have done the most to decriminalise.

Hungary - not, Portugal - yes. Hungary's got like a super fucking fascist right-wing government at the moment and they're like arresting journalists and shit. They had some quite bad police crackdowns at Ozora and at Sun Festival.

I think it's in Czech - Czech Tek got raided couple years ago year thinking about it. I mean it's more laissez-faire in Czech than in Hungary and Slovakia/Slovenia or whatever but I think the law is quite often maybe getting away with possession. If you do get caught with shit you are still fucked no matter what and maybe it's easier to bribe your way out of shit... I don't know, I'm sure it does happen. So Portugal is the exact opposite but that's only been for the last four years. I mean Boom was always happening prior to these changes and again, Spain has now...

I think one limitation is that UK festivals have really shit security as well. In almost any country in Europe you can snort drugs openly on the dancefloor and you don't have to think "we get searched on the way in" so you can bring drinks and drugs, whatever. It's like a free party and this is why you go to free parties, because you don't have to look over your shoulder when you have a line or a smoke or whatever and even the most free UK festivals like Glade or like Cosmo just have always have this 'big brother looking over your shoulder' vibe to them. You are always conscious of something, whether it's conscious of being busted for something, conscious of being stopped on the way in somewhere - you have to plan your night because the music can stop at 4 o'clock and you can't get really mashed up at 1 o'clock because you'll be sitting in your tent rocking for five hours afterwards!

...the reputation the UK has - probably something I've heard quite widely is British people really like to party and they go hard, sort of thing and I wonder whether the kind of short time span of these things, means we say "okay I've really got to get really fucked straightaway and get really into it, because I know that I've got to pace it in a different way than if I'm at a two-week festival".

Perhaps that's part of it - I mean that's definitely part of it to an extent. I think British people maybe have a bit more fun festivals, in general, it's like we have more fancy dress and there's more stupid shit. Go to a festival and people put in so much effort for this most ridiculous thing that completely ruins their weekend because they have to lug it around the entire time and people do that kind of shit. I'm not sure of the argument there, compression means you have to get more mashed up, cram it all in. You got standard extended rock festival and normal things running in Leeds or whatever - I think it's more the difference between like mainstream or pop rock/whatever festivals, but there is difference in psytrance

festivals. I think the British crazy festival thing comes out in say Reading or Lowlands festival perhaps but I mean yeah, maybe there is a case to be said for our electronic music festivals being... we know that we don't get many chances to do it, we can't just drive across the Schengen Borders in the next country to go to another one and we know they can be - have you considered whether maybe as part of it, we know that if it's sunny now we've got to make the fucking most of it?

Yeah, exactly. You know, this stupid shit is like something that really makes me very happy as well about UK stuff I've been to.

Yeah, I don't know I think there's maybe something to be said about the British not wanting to take themselves too seriously. You have to party hard for 3 days but you can dress up like a tit and have fun as well - or maybe it's that we think that other countries take themselves a bit more seriously about stuff.

I heard that Antaris is quite dress-uppy, but maybe that stands out from the norm for European festivals? That's just what I've heard anyway.

I think people get as messed up or whatever but I'm not sure there's much desire to be silly and nude and be a trickster as there is here. Naked Pink Guy is always a classic example right, so he was at every single Glade and then he would go to all the European festivals and I assume he's an English guy, at least I hope he is. And he never had any of his friends with him, he was just always an old naked dude on his own and he travelled round the world to be Naked Pink Guy and, at least the first few times I saw him, it was hilarious and amazing.

...I have to say it turns out people who were putting on parties when the shift/change happened, a lot of the people putting parties on in London were Brazilians - people like Mystic Systems. Venom is a different crew (also known as Summertrip, New Age, Frequency Shift, Almost Hippie, Freaky Hz, and most recently dozens of parties under the names Boogie Woogie and Hakuna Matata).

Yes I heard about Venom - there was a lot of stuff on Psyforum about it. Some of it had to do with the name and what sort of connotations it had I think.

Yeah there was a lot of shit chatted about Venom on Psyforum. There was some 50 year old guys around that time saying on Psyforum that "I'd never go to a party named after Venom, it's just distasteful". Just because it's so negative or whatever but that's a bit ridiculous, you don't have to call it fucking 'Fluffy Candy-floss' for it to make a good party, it's just a fucking name! The point I'm trying to make is there was a lot of racially charged language being used - a lot of like "these fucking guys, coming to London putting on parties, and we've been doing them in Kent since the dawn of time (by which they mean like, three or four years or whatever!) and we know everyone, whereas these guys ..."

[Are foreign usurpers!] -

Even if they're right it's really quite distasteful - that's why I had to step back at that point in time because it wasn't just wasn't productive the conversations people were having- like if you've got a fair point to make, which a lot of people had, that's not the right way to go about it. So that was an aspect of this change of guard situation that was happening that was interesting. I'm not sure anybody specifically pointed that out at the time I was definitely aware of it on Psyforum discussions and I couldn't be bothered to debate this stuff on Psyforum.

I spoke to someone who seemed quite disillusioned about the UK scene. They were saying everything changed about 10 years ago, just about the same time period we're talking about, yes, 2008 - and things started to get a lot more restricted and you can't

even break even anymore and things, so they started doing artist liaison at international festivals rather than the representation side of things.

I think it was something like a golden age, but there was bit of a bubble going on where that was a legitimate way to make a living. At the end of the day an agent is just like creaming off the money from people. I've got no beef with any of these people but I didn't really see the point being an agent for producers in such a small scene when anyone can just email each other - I don't really see what value it has. The situation is like if I wanted a book like Kindzadza or something, some big-name, I will just message them on Facebook and say when are you free and how much do you cost. You don't need have an agent mediating a conversation - it's not like booking [inaudible] or something.

There may be things that come from what you said that I'd like to ask you more about that's okay?

One thing - Bristol people, their perceptions are different. I met Bristol people in Germany and they were super involved in stuff and they're doing a lot of their own parties writing the music and putting on their own festivals and stuff but it's just so ... segregated that it's a West Country thing going on. I think it doesn't connect to London and doesn't get infected by some of the bullshit that happens in London.

And I hear that from people that they think that the sound of music going on there is a lot more commercial because they've got a lot more of a student scene going on down there?

Bristol? Planet Shroom definitely, but these guys are very much into their dark prog.

So you're not talking Tribe of Frog, or are you?

No I'm talking about Triplicity and talking about Pearl Festival.

Did it actually happen this time?

Did it not happen before?

No it got cancelled on our way there, literally the second before it was due to start and we ended up on some land somewhere and had a party but...

Yeah I think that was about five or six years ago. Apparently there is one happening this year - it's on Facebook but I'm not on Facebook so I'm going to contact these guys. [J added comment to transcript: Dark Pearl went off this NYE - I wasn't there but it was very much a "friends" party with food and chai stall and even kitchen and rooms and things.]

It sounds like compared to Brighton, Bristol is - Brighton is quite shit compared to what's going on there.

Yes there hasn't been a proper psytrance party in Brighton for about 10 years or something - 2004? There used to be something once a month going on and even a bit after that actually because there was Dmitry he knew this Polish guy who used to make really cool parties all the time. I think it's changed - before that people stop doing stuff moves away and then once Dmitry left right when he did then there was nobody doing this stuff and maybe the Volks change the policy and stuff like this.

And also Freak Bazaar people are trying to branch out to do more stuff outside the Volks because it's shit.

I mean Freak Bazaar people, are they still in Brighton?

Yeah

But they're the old guard of the psytrance scene.

Yeah but they've just kind of stepped back a bit because people are having babies and things and they've got more responsibilities and so this half of that crew and some other people are doing Freaks... something else Freaks... [Fundamental Freqs]

And there's something called Neon.

Yes and Temple Movement - so there's that and that is something I'm interested in as well is kind of like all the downtempo thing starting up.

Yeah that's a cool thing happening in Brighton.

And there's a whole like new younger crowd that is into that as well.

And I think the thing is, back in the day there used to be, Sussex University like put fresh blood in the psytrance scene

Really, Sussex University?

Yeah they used to have like psytrance nights at the University and this was like 2004 or something.

I didn't start uni until 2005 so I probably just missed it.

Maybe was just my mates, I don't know - this is the thing, that everything is so coloured by your own personal...

I wondered whether things had waned here because of the proximity to London and how easy it is to go to London for things anyway?

Sure, I think it was just like a couple crews making it happen but now they're not doing any more so there's no kind of ground swell going on anymore - it's quite fragile I guess, the whole thing.

Yeah I worry that post-Brexit, are things going to be even more isolated and even less people travelling to come here for festivals and all that?

Hey, we survived all the bullshit laws and the new squat laws in the last three years so... You're right but I think I would say that that perhaps a psytrance party in London now would be like 80% Europeans 10% non-EU and 10% born in Great Britain - that's London very particularly. The scene there in Brighton and Wales, it's mainly like English people.

That is just London?

Yes, because London is cosmopolitan but that is a huge difference to what it used to be 10 years ago and I don't know where the fucking English people have gone, whether they're just not into psytrance anymore.

So the percentage of British-born people at psytrance parties in London has gone down you think?

Yeah massively - and I wouldn't know where to start thinking about the reasons why.

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